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SECOND COMING OF THE LORD

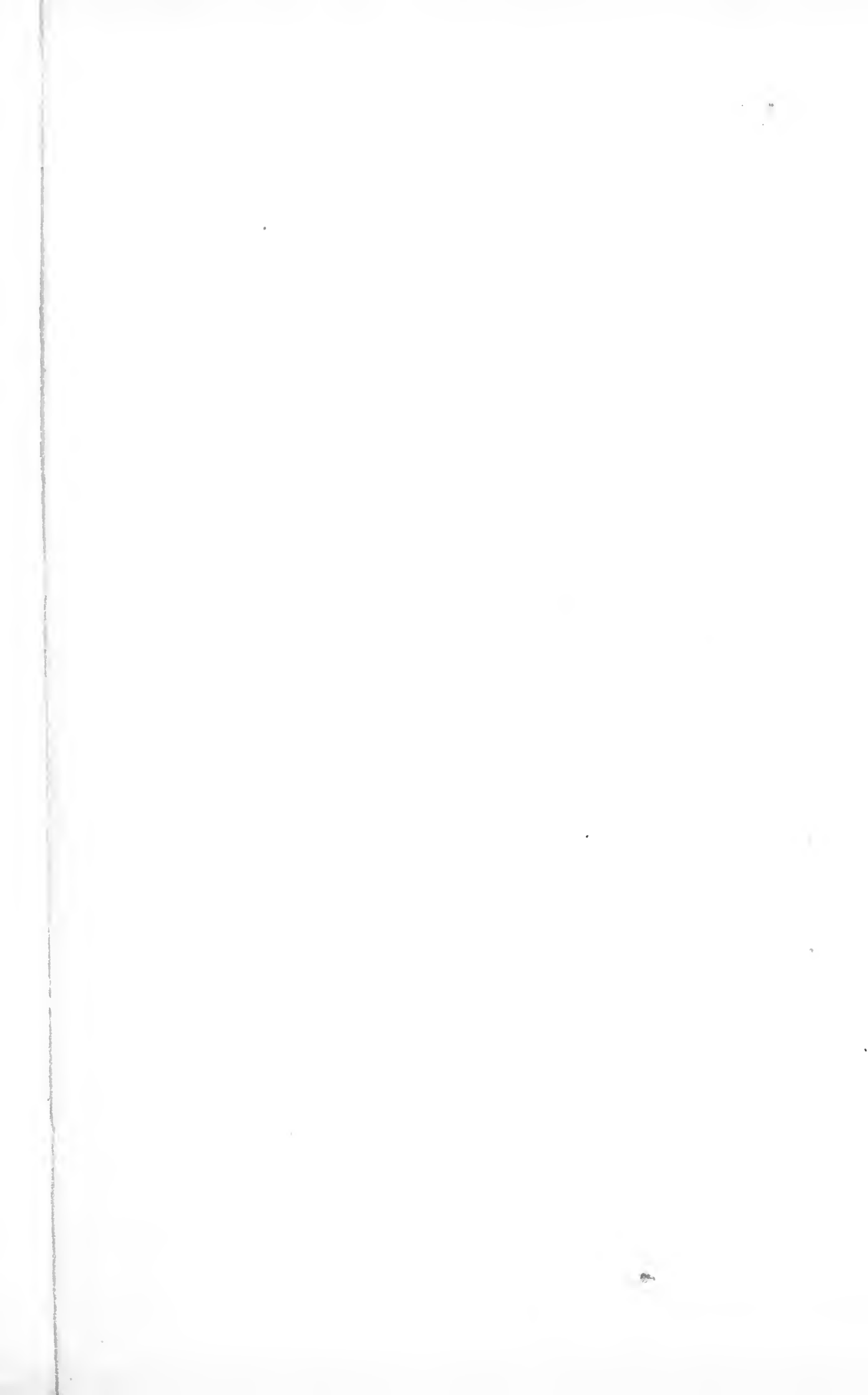
CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO THE VIEWS PROMULGATED  
BY THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN AND SO-CALLED  
EVANGELISTS.

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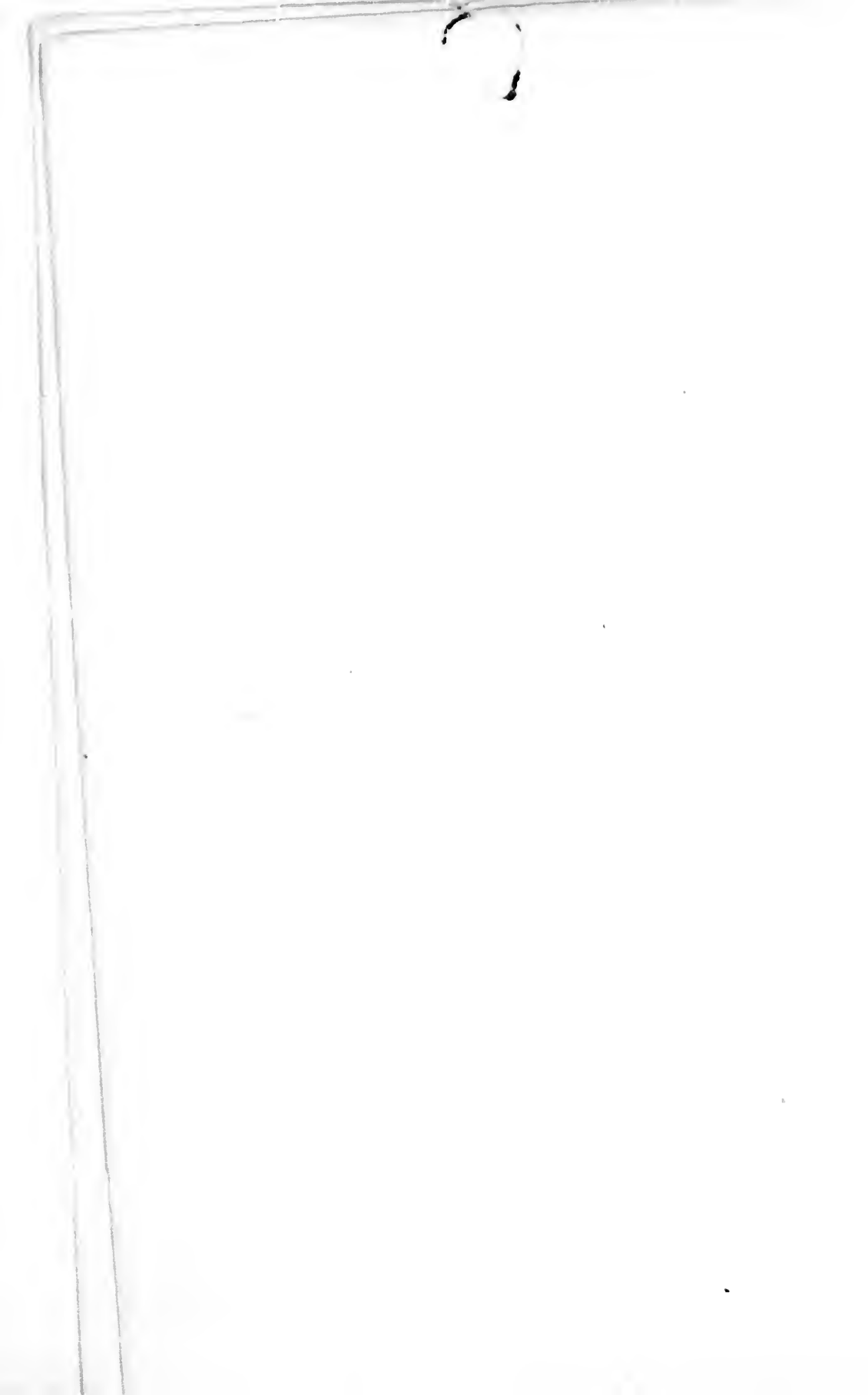


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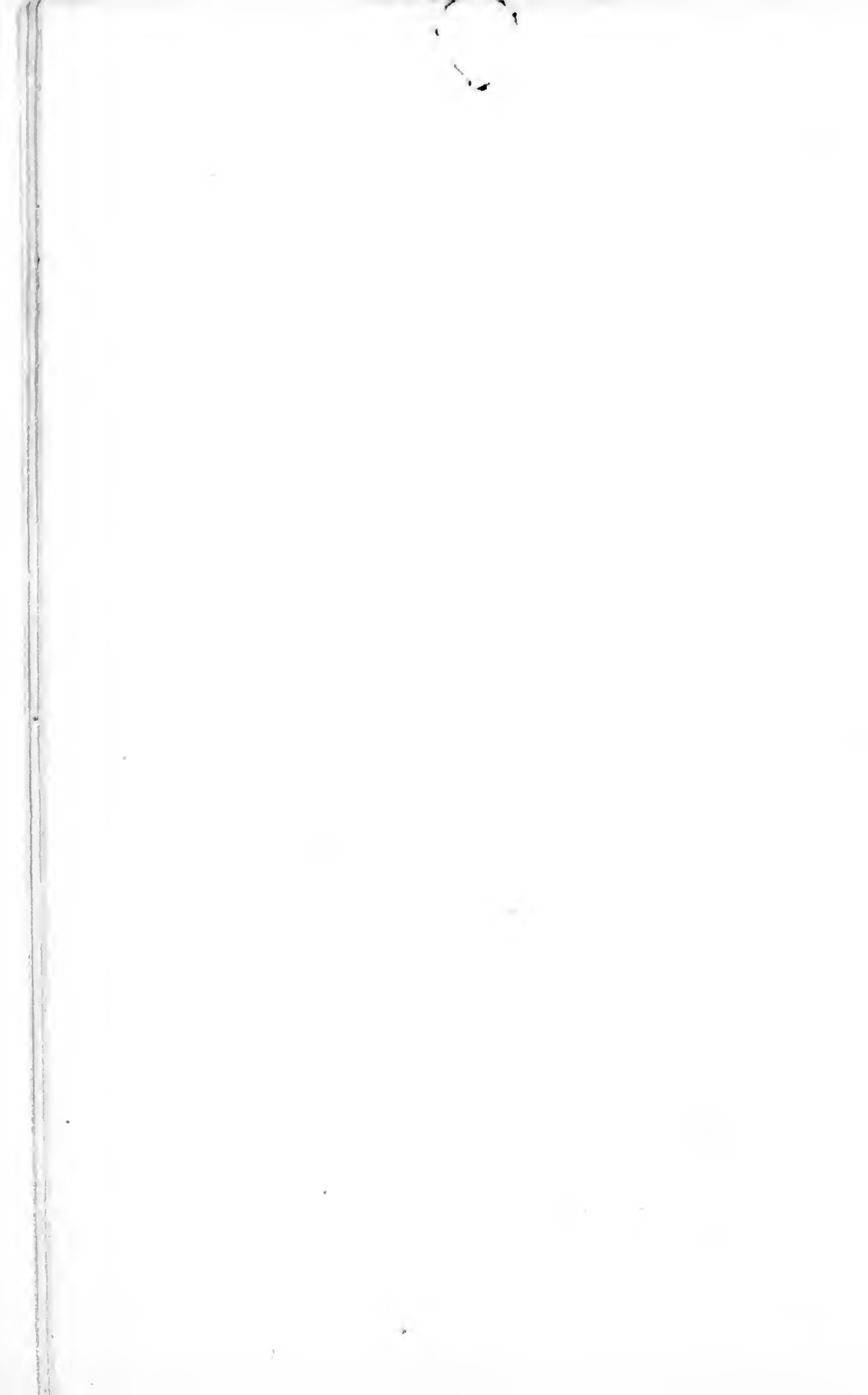


## PREFACE.

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THIS tractate was prepared under the conviction that a popular discussion of the doctrine of the Second Coming is needed among us, in order to meet the unhappy tendencies which often appear in seasons of revived religious interest. Not unfrequently, at such times, earnest Christian men teach the doctrines here impugned, and circulate tracts containing them, without any idea of the error thus spread abroad and the danger incurred.

Although at present there is no controversy affecting the writer, or the people of his charge; nevertheless, he thought that the subject might be profitably considered at a time when heat of spirit was wanting, and accordingly delivered this tractate as a series of lectures on Sabbath evenings. The favourable reception these lectures met with has led him to publish them. Several friends, nevertheless, whose judgment he has learned to respect, and who heard the lectures, have expressed the opinion that they may be useful to others. With the fervent prayer that this may be the result, to the glory of God, this defence of the truth is presented to the Churches of Christ.



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## THE DOCTRINE OF THE

# Second Coming of Our Lord.

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THE doctrine of the second coming is now meeting the Church of God in a new form. The Millerite view of the advent is a thing of the past. The remorseless march of historical events has disproved those confident vaticinations which fixed the end of the world for A.D. 1843, 1866, or 1870. The year-day theory—that is, that a day in prophecy means a year—though still held by some as applicable to unfulfilled predictions in particular passages, has been weighed and found wanting in its claim to be the key to unlock the mystery, and to fix the times and seasons indicated in prophecy. Further investigation has convinced such as are not too blinded, that the general tenor of Scripture, and not a few particular passages, cannot be made to harmonize with the literalism which thirty years ago was so loudly asserted to be the only proper and reverent method of interpreting Scripture.

Notwithstanding this change, erroneous doctrine regarding the coming of our Lord is being diligently spread abroad, both by the living voice of men, who have the appearance of being warm-hearted, earnest Christians, and in tracts and pamphlets which are circul-

ated with the avowed design of awakening Christendom by the "Bridegroom cry," and saving such as believe from impending judgments.

Not a few of the excellent men and women who are connected with the so-called Evangelistic movement of our day, have embraced the pre-millenarian view of the coming of our Lord—that is, that the Lord will come before the Millenium—and not unfrequently that doctrine is proclaimed, with more or less fulness, at Gospel meetings, Bible readings, Conventions of Sabbath School teachers, and Conferences of Christian workers. Presented at such times, and thus commended by being associated with unquestioned piety, conspicuous zeal, and earnest Christian effort, the doctrine is quietly making its way into our churches, and very many of our best people are deeply exercised, when they find that views which have come down to us from our fathers are thus being undermined, and that a disquieting uncertainty as to the truth of the traditional doctrines of the Church of God is insensibly taking possession of the minds of excellent Christians with whom they associate, if not perplexing themselves. Is it true, such persons ask (to use the illustration of the prince of modern evangelists)—Is it true that Christians who preach the Gospel are like men in the life-boat, whose only business is to pick off as many as they can from the foundering wreck, before a doomed world sinks into the seething abyss of coming wrath and hopeless destruction? Is this God's sole purpose in the preaching of the Gospel? Is the conversion of the world a pious dream?

The history of the Church may teach us that this desponding view is naturally connected with the disappointment felt by Christians, at the small success which attends the preaching of the gospel. In the first centuries, amid the persecutions which the Church endured, the unfaithfulness and worldly conformity of a large portion of it, and the wickedness, the horrors and the desolation which spread like a black pall over the Roman Empire, as it declined and fell to pieces before its barbarian assailants, many serious souls fled into monkish seclusion in the deserts, and despairing of the world, for which there seemed no hope, they prayed for Christ's coming, to destroy the monstrous wickedness of men by fiery judgments. We see now that they were mistaken. So in this our day there are some disgusted and saddened by the abounding wickedness which they see both in the Church and the world, and by the apparent increase of iniquity, who have given up in despair, and as their only hope, look for Christ to take them home, and to introduce an era of fiery judgment for the destruction of the wicked and the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness and peace.

Nor is this result to be wondered at. We can sympathise in measure with the disappointment which says : Eighteen centuries have passed away since the Holy Ghost was given, and yet only a small portion of mankind have heard the glad tidings. The places where at first the gospel flourished have fallen back to almost pagan ignorance and wickedness. The Church has declined from the pure faith and practice of apostolic times, and has become thoroughly corrupt, obscuring and pervert-

ing the truth, and countenancing, if not fostering, abominable wickedness. Even Protestantism, after three hundred years' trial, seems to be a failure; for ignorance and superstition prevail to a sad degree, and unbelief, if not atheism, has taken the place of Christianity, in the seats of learning and the centres of philosophic and scientific pursuits. Missions to the heathen have been in a great measure a failure; after half a century of missionary effort, the great mass of heathenism has scarcely felt the influence of Christianity, and still presents insuperable obstacles to the faith of Jesus. At our own doors too, amid all the light of Christian civilization, we see iniquity growing in boldness, enormity and extent. There is an epidemic of crime. The world, such good people say, is becoming worse, not better, and notwithstanding all that is being done, it is manifest that the Gospel as now preached and the Church as now existing and working, can never bring about an era of universal truth and righteousness.

We say that we can so far sympathize with the feeling engendered of despondent gloom which thus finds utterance. That feeling should send us to the Lord in earnest supplication for the laying bare of His arm. But we are satisfied that the conclusion to which these people of God have come through this feeling is erroneous. The effort they make to show from Scripture that the Gospel, is not "the power of God unto salvation" for the nations and the world, as well as for individuals, is to be deplored and resisted.

It is true that the world, regarded as the enemy of God, is no better than it was eighteen hundred years

ago : it never will be ; but the world, meaning thereby the whole race of man, is better to day than at any time since our Lord walked the earth. There is a greater number of true Christians than ever. The religion of Jesus has a wider and more powerful influence upon men generally than ever. There is a more intelligent appreciation of the truth among Christians and more devoted earnest effort than ever before. If, side by side with the advance of Christianity, we have also a corresponding advance of wickedness, it is only what our Lord taught us to expect—tares among the wheat—but notwithstanding, the wheat is ripening for the harvest. Time will not allow of a full answer to the sad lamentations which imply despair as to the power of the Holy Ghost and the efficacy of the Gospel. It must suffice to have shown that this feeling of despondency leads the pious earnest souls who suffer under it, to cast about for some other hope, and some other way of salvation for the world than the Gospel of the grace of God. What, they ask, ought we to do ? And the answer which they approve, seems to be : Separate yourselves from the world, you are not of it ; you are vessels of mercy, but the world is doomed to sink under the wrath of God. Christ may come to-day to take you—His Church—home, when you will be safe in heaven, while the world is overwhelmed by judgments. Therefore be sure of your own salvation, and seek to save as many as you can, but have nothing to do with a perishing world or its schemes of improvement and amelioration. Christ will soon come to take you out of it. This is the hope for which you are to look. Do not expect

death, but the Coming. Wait to be taken out of a world, which is soon to be visited with unheard of tribulation and desolating judgment.

Of the practical consequences which flow from this view of the coming of the Lord, we shall have something to say hereafter. We purpose now to consider more fully the several doctrines which become necessary in order to justify this hope and construct a consistent theory of a Pre-millenarian coming.

In preparing the following statement it has been found that the changes and modifications, which the doctrine has undergone during thirty years, are so great that although a few leading principles remain, one can scarcely recognize in the full blown theory of a Dabry, a Kelly, or a Trotter, the indefinite but earnest longings of a Hewitson or a Bickersteth. Inexorable logic forces the theorist on step by step. One false step necessitates a second; and when once the train has been switched on to the wrong track, it only requires a good head of steam and a stout heart to find one's self far away from the main line on which the Church of God has in times past been pursuing her journey homeward. Our purpose being to look at the doctrine as *now* taught, we shall have recourse to tracts, pamphlets and books, which are being freely circulated by the so-called Evangelists and Brethren. They claim, and probably with justice, to be pre-eminently the preachers of the Coming. It may not be true, as they assert, that all that is good and mighty in the present Evangelical movement throughout the world is to be traced to a leaven of Plymouthism, which is secretly spreading it-

self in every English speaking community ; but they claim—and the honour we do not feel inclined to dispute with them—to have roused sleeping Christendom by the “ *Bridegroom cry* ;” and certainly in their teaching great stress is laid on the Hope of the Coming, while among them the new doctrine has found its freest development. Besides this, our object in preparing this paper is practical, not speculative. Our wish is that those who receive and peruse those tracts and pamphlets so profusely scattered abroad and sometimes thrust into our hands, may understand the doctrine which they contain. Hence we have judged it proper carefully to examine these documents.

On many points of doctrine our pre-millenarian friends profess to agree with other Christians ; on other points the divergence is so slight that it does not call for notice ; but on still other points the divergence is wide, and the difference of sentiment so pronounced, that those who adopt the new views feel constrained to withdraw from the communion of all Evangelical churches. And if, for a while, they hesitate to break the holy bands of fellowship, by which they have from birth been united to the church and dearly loved friends, experience proves that at last separation must come. Every bond must ruthlessly be torn asunder, they must go out from among the churches to fellowship with the Saints in the Assembly of the Brethren. It is this sad, mournful result, which invariably accompanies the proclamation and reception of the *new Gospel of the Grace of God*, that impels us to say what may appear to be severe things, if perchance we may lead men to consider

well before they adopt views so irreconcilably hostile to the received doctrine of the Churches.

The peculiar views, then, to which we refer, *in so far as they are new*, and contrary to the received opinion in the Church Catholic, may be stated somewhat as follows :

1. Our Lord's coming may take place at any moment, and we should habitually be looking for Him. This coming *for* the saints will probably be *unseen*, and known only to the saints who are waiting for Him. He will not come down to the earth, but *into the air*. The dead in Christ, who have been saved through believing the "Gospel of the grace of God" between the day of Pentecost and this coming, will be raised, and the saints who are alive will be changed. These constitute *the Church*, the Bride, and will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. They will *go into heaven*, where they will *appear before the judgment seat* of Christ, have their good works appraised, and receive their due rewards. But they will not come into judgment for their evil deeds. The *Marriage* of Christ and His Church will then take place in heaven.

2. At some time not definitely fixed, but after the ascent of the Church, the *Old Testament saints* will be raised from the dead and go into heaven; and at a still later point in this period, *a number of saints* who, after the Church was caught up, repented and became witnesses for God, and *suffered martyrdom* on that account, will also be raised up and go into heaven. Thus, at the end of this period there will be *with the Lord* in heaven; (1.) The Church, now married to Him; (2.) Old Testament saints; (3.) The risen martyrs—these three dis-

tinct classes—waiting for the *Day of the manifestation* of the sons of God.

3. Meanwhile *on earth*, the removal of the Church and of the *Holy Ghost* along with it, permits the development of evil and the *Revelation of the wicked* or lawless one. Christendom wholly apostatises, and the so-called Churches are given over to delusion, to believe a lie. *Antichrist* comes in his own name, and is received by the churches; which become subject to him, the Prince of the revived Fourth or Roman kingdom. *The Jews*, still in unbelief, *come back* to Palestine, rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple, and establish sacrifice and Jewish worship as of old. Some of them are converted, witness for God, and preach the “gospel of the kingdom.”

(These constitute *the Faithful Remnant*. After a time Antichrist, the Prince of apostate Christendom, makes a covenant with the Jews, allowing them to worship according to the law of Moses. “In the midst of the week,”—that is, after three *years* and a half—he breaks that covenant and turns to persecuting them. He sets himself in the Temple of God, as God, and requires all men—the Jews, Christendom, and the Gentiles—to worship his image. Then comes the *Great Tribulation*, when Antichrist as *the Beast*, supported by the second beast, or his prime minister; who by miracles deceives the people yet further, blasphemes God, makes war on the saints, and overcomes them. The faithful remnant are persecuted and killed, and two of their number, (or as some fancy, *the two witnesses*, Enoch or Moses, and Elias), are slain in Jerusalem and lie unburied in the street. After three days and a half (not years this time)

they come to life again and ascend to heaven. Antichrist then goes to *make war with the Lamb in heaven (!)*

4. Immediately thereafter comes the *Day of the Son of Man*, the day of wrath, of vengeance, and of judgment. *The Lord is seen coming with His Saints.* He comes as a conquering king at the head of His saints for an army, to war with his enemies and to *take his kingdom.* A literal *destruction of men in the flesh*—of the living nations—takes place. Christendom is destroyed by the internecine strife of the kings of the earth, and Antichrist by the breath of the King's mouth, and the *brightness* of his coming. The two beasts are taken and cast alive into a literal *lake of fire* burning with brimstone. The rest of the *Lord's enemies*, including the kings of the earth, are literally *slain with the sharp sword* that goes out of his mouth, and literal vultures gorge themselves on the rotting carcasses. This is the *Revelation* of the Son of man, the Epiphany of the Coming; when he destroys the wicked and removes them from His kingdom, which he now sets up on earth.

5. Then is the *Judgment* of the living nations. The faithful remnant of the Tribulation period from among the Jews, with such from among the Gentiles as treated them kindly, *are received into the kingdom.* These form the nucleus of the kingdom, and thus it is begun. The rest of the nations depart from the King into everlasting fire. Jesus reigns on earth.

6. Then *Satan is literally seized and bound in the pit.* The Church, the Old Testament saints, and risen Martyrs—all who had part in the First Resurrection—receive thrones and sit down with Christ to *judge the*

*world*, and to rule over the nations that are left. This is a *sessional judgment*, and it lasts for a thousand years. This same period is otherwise called the Millenium. Under the beneficent rule of King Jesus and his assessors, the saints, the Jews prosper, the ten tribes re-appear, and are again established in Palestine—"so all Israel is saved." The Gentile nations are subject to Israel, and bring in their tribute to Jerusalem, as well as go up every Sabbath to Jerusalem to worship. This is *the Kingdom of Heaven* which the God of heaven sets up. David's son according to the flesh is the literal king of men in the flesh; his literal throne or chair of state is in the literal Jerusalem; his literal kingdom is of this world and embraces all living peoples. The Church, sitting on thrones in the visible heavens over the earthly Jerusalem, is united to earth, and these are the days of heaven upon earth. Obedient Jews and Gentiles do not die. Only the wicked die, who are cut off from the kingdom for their wickedness, as successive centuries of judgment roll on. All the loyal subjects of the kingdom live on for evermore in great earthly prosperity and unbroken peace.

7. But *Satan is again literally unchained*, and goes forth to deceive the Gentiles. Rebellion breaks out in the kingdom, and the rebels are gathered together out of the parts more remote from Jerusalem, where the presence and power of the King are least felt. A rebel host innumerable goes up against Palestine, and assaults the holy city, but they are intercepted in their career by fire from heaven which literally burns them up. Then the devil is again seized and cast into the

literal lake of fire, where the living Antichrist and his prime minister are tormented for ever and ever.

8. After all this a great white throne is set up, and by some undefined agency the *wicked Dead are Raised*. All the impenitent of Old Testament times, of the Christian dispensation, of the tribulation era, and of the Millennial age—all the *unrighteous*, and they alone—come forth from their graves and are judged. The books are opened; and as the record shows that their deeds were evil, and the book of life does not contain their names, they are cast into the lake of fire. Death and Hades (!) too are cast into it.

9. No further change takes place. The heavens and the earth have now been made new. Every enemy, even death, has been subdued. The Church in heaven, and the righteous nations on earth who never tasted of death, continue to live in unending bliss, but eternally distinct from each other. The kingdom is given over to the Father, and God becomes all in all.

The above statement contains the chief points of the new doctrine, connected together in their chronological order. To very many the bare statement will bring home the conviction of the absurdity of the whole theory, and they will impatiently exclaim, "enough of this nonsense." Others will call in question whether I have understood the teaching of "the Brethren." I can assure such that I am more fully informed than they are. They may have listened to addresses delivered with great assurance, bible in hand, in which one or two points only were asserted as God's truth, or they may have read tracts, in which one or two points are cursorily treated

of, while their connection with other doctrines is not examined. I have *studied* the *whole theory* carefully part by part, and as a whole, and if those who doubt my word will examine for themselves, they will find that I am not far astray in my statement. The Brethren, as usual, will probably denounce the statement as incorrect—for that I am prepared—or they may say that it is not held by them all or in every particular by any one. But this is to equivocate. Every doctrine I have mentioned, and others as strange and unscriptural, may be found in the tracts which I have myself received from the hands of brethren, or at furthest at second hand, but circulated by brethren; and it is unpardonably false dealing, first to circulate a tract and then to disclaim the doctrine it contains. I admit, however, that in many cases, both in addresses and tracts, the language is so carefully guarded, the connections so studiously observed, and the whole presentation so artfully spiced with pious reflections and inept illustrations, that an ordinary reader will hear the addresses and peruse the tracts, and will swallow down the unwholesome mixture without detecting or even suspecting the pernicious leaven by which they are pervaded.

The theory is a product of time; not at once but piece-meal has it been constructed. It has been corrected, enlarged, modified, as the exigencies of controversy made necessary, or its promoters from time to time professed to find further light. Nor is it yet completed; further changes and additions will come, if the doctrine of the Coming, as held by the Brethren, is not abandoned. The traditions of the Churches, no matter how

scriptural, must be upset ; and arduously do our friends labor to accomplish their task. Docilely the disciples sit at the feet of their leaders, giving them credit when they claim to be taught by the Holy Ghost. Blindly and without question they follow, they know not whither, the few men of learning and ability who have adopted these views.

*Avowedly the theory rests on an ingenious collocation and interpretation of difficult and dark passages, chiefly of unfulfilled prophecy.* Great skill is required properly to select and arrange the patches which form the doctrinal Mosaic, and to commingle aright the literal and allegorical meanings of texts which suit the purpose. Subtle distinctions are framed where no difference exists. The clear light of a plain simple scripture is toned down, lest the doubtful inference which is being drawn from a dark passage may pale before it, and passages, which refuse to be inwrought amid the patchwork, must be altogether thrown aside as useless and having no place in the teaching intended for the Church in the present age, but applicable only to Jews, before the day of Pentecost, and after the coming. To any one that knows his bible, it is astounding to witness the way in which God's word is torn asunder, mutilated, mangled, twisted, wrested, forced into the most unnatural and arbitrary connections, mixed up, tortured so as to force it to acknowledge the theory, or silenced, lest it should protest against this thoroughly human imagination. The promoters of the theory do not hesitate to claim a kind of inspiration ; they say that they have been taught this doctrine by the Holy Ghost.

They make a great display of their pocket bible, as they deftly turn over the leaves and assert that they teach nothing but the bible. Beware! the bible in their hands is not the bible as God gave it, as prophets and apostles uttered their messages. It is a bible in a *new light*, themselves being witnesses, a light unknown to the people of God in the past: a bible transposed and rearranged to suit the fancies of self-conceited men, and made to speak a doctrine for which martyrs and confessors would never have shed their blood. No, verily, men who adopt that theory in its spirit, must separate themselves from the noble company of martyrs, and the whole Church of Christ in the past; they *must* come out and claim for themselves, as they do, the exclusive name of "The Brethren," the Church, the alone Bride of the Lamb. The claim and the separation must follow if the theory is true.

To follow the theorists through their labyrinthine wanderings, examining their multifarious interpretations in detail, and refuting their vain imaginings one by one, is a task which no sane man would attempt. Earnestly do we dissuade such as have not already been befooled by the theory, from attempting to grope their way amid its dark tortuous windings. They will inevitably become lost; and if they follow with implicit faith their fanciful guides, will find themselves not emerging into light, but abiding in darkness, where human wisdom and self-sufficient pride maintain their baneful pre-eminence. It would serve no good purpose to address ourselves to those who have already made up their minds and *know*, being taught supernaturally, that the

new doctrine is of God ; these are beyond the reach of argument, and are “ wiser in their own eyes than seven men that can render a reason.” Of such, Spurgeon has well said, pray to be delivered from inspired men and women, whether it be an infallible Pope or a Plymouth Assembly met in an upper room, with the Holy Ghost for president. Without, however, seeking the recovery of those who *will not* see, or wearying such as desire some light upon this interesting subject, we may, within reasonable limits, and we hope profitably, consider the leading features of the new doctrine.

We propose then to examine the principles on which this theory rests. If its fundamental positions can be upset, then the ingenious fabric will of itself topple over, and God’s truth will stand forth vindicated in its beauty. It can easily be shown that the whole theory rests upon certain *definitions* ; and that these definitions are without warrant from God’s word, nay, are contrary to scripture, subversive of the faith once delivered to the saints, and dangerous in their tendency. That these definitions have obtained currency among Christians only shows how imperfect is the acquaintance with Bible truth, which obtains among the Christian people of our day ; and how easily false doctrine can be introduced, if nothing startling be said at first, and due regard be had to avoiding offence, until the confidence of good and unsuspecting people has been gained by proclaiming for a time truth common to all Churches. By doing this the self-constituted evangelist is able by-and-bye to undermine the influence of the ministry, and to discredit it among the people to such a degree, that when a faithful watch-

man raises his voice in warning, he is not heeded, and the good old way is forsaken and laughed at by the deceived disciple; who accepts another gospel from that which he had received, which is not another gospel, but something so entirely, fundamentally and essentially different, as to necessitate his withdrawal from the church of God and his association with a few brethren who have no visible or acknowledged bond of union or fixed creed.

The fallacious definitions on which the theory rests refer: (1) to the Church; (2) to the Kingdom of God; (3) to the personal Coming of our Lord; (4) to the Judgment; (5) to the Resurrection; (6) to the Millennium. There are other erroneous definitions and distinctions, subordinate in their relations, which we may have to notice in the course of our discussion, but the disproof of the pre-millenarian definition on the points above indicated is all that is necessary to convince any candid enquirer of the false and unscriptural character of the theory as a whole. To this task we now address ourselves; and let us pray that it may be so done as to be useful to us, and to bring glory to God.

## I. THE CHURCH.

First then we shall enquire what is the Church of God? That our pre-millenarian friends are fully aware of the fundamental importance of this question, and know that their views cannot be reconciled with those held by Christians generally, will appear from the following extracts from the writings of one who speaks with

authority.\* He is arguing against the forcible objection to the theory, that, "when Christ comes, the Church will be absolutely and numerically complete, admitting of no subsequent accessions," and hence that this theory makes no provision for the "lower departments of the millennial kingdom," that is, the living nations which are to be converted and saved after the coming—and mark well the words,—“The objection is based on ‘the assumption that THE CHURCH AND ALL THAT ARE TO BE SAVED are terms of identical signification. This,’ he goes on to say ‘is a pure assumption. It has no doubt, like many others equally baseless, obtained a kind of popular currency which leads numbers who have never examined the subject for themselves, to take for granted that by ‘the Church’ is meant ‘the whole company of the saved from the beginning to the end of time.’ If this were true, the objection before us would be unanswerable.”

We see then how all important to the theory this definition is. If the definition of the churches is true, millenarianism is false. We accept the issue. It is true, and the new doctrine is false. Before giving our proof, we desire to note the unblushing self-sufficient arrogance with which the doctrine of the Church universal is set aside. A doctrine which has occupied the prayerful and intensest thought, and commanded the assent of the wisest and best Christians in all the churches during successive centuries, is without hesitation jauntily pronounced “baseless, and a pure assump-

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\* “Plain Papers on Prophetic and other Subjects,” by W. Trotter. London, 1873.

“tion, having a popular currency, and taken for granted  
“by men who never examined the subject for themselves.”  
Can this cool, shameless self-confidence go farther?  
Has the deluded writer no knowledge of what martyrs  
and confessors studied, believed in, and defended with  
their lives? Has he no respect for their deep convictions?

We can also see why it has become *necessary* now  
in the latter half of the nineteenth century to find a new  
definition of the Church. The old received doctrine is fatal  
to the Plymouth view, hence the necessity; the theory  
must be saved, therefore to the rescue; let us have a *new*  
definition, which will leave room for a Coming prior to  
the salvation of the whole elect of God. What  
matter that the doctrine of the Church for eighteen  
hundred years must perish, and that God's elect must  
be split into sections; let the doctrine go. It was  
held by men who never examined the subject! but now  
forsooth *the Brethren* have examined the subject *for them-*  
*selves*; so let all men be liars, but let the Brethren be  
true.

Notice how nicely the definition suits its purpose,  
although it outrages the whole scope of Scripture. I  
quote from the same author. “It was not till after the  
“death and resurrection of Jesus that the Church began.  
“In the purpose of God, it existed before all worlds.  
“But as to its actual existence on earth *the Church was*  
“*formed by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of*  
“*Pentecost.* Those who till then had been individual  
“believers, disciples of Christ, were by the descent of the  
“Holy Spirit incorporated into one body; which *has exist-*

*“ ed ever since, and is the Church of God. It is the actual  
“ living unity with Christ, and with each other, of those  
“ who since Christ’s ascension, are formed into this  
“ unity by the presence of the Holy Ghost, come down  
“ from heaven. It has its existence on earth between the  
“ day of Pentecost and the descent of the Lord Jesus into  
“ the air.”*

The Church is thus narrowed, that the theory may not vanish. Old Testament Saints are ruled out of the Church. Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, the penitent thief, have no place there. Those who shall be converted after Christ takes his Bride home are also shut out from it. And why? That the brethren may be justified in saying, that Christ may come at any time for His Saints, who constitute the elect of the elect, with a monopoly of the Holy Ghost and the special privilege of claiming the Son of God as a husband. And they shall be first in the kingdom of heaven, having a higher place, a better heritage, a nobler privilege than Abel, or Enoch, or Daniel, or John Baptist, or father Abraham himself. There is no pride here! oh no. Behold the humility of the Saints, for they are worthy.

But is this definition in accordance with Scripture? Is it true? We hurl back the charge which the brethren bring against the churches. *Theirs* is the pure assumption, the baseless fancy; contrary alike to the tenor of God’s word, to individual passages and to Christian instinct. The definition is the sensuous imaginings of self-sufficient men, whose carnal prejudice renders them blind to the spiritual beauty of God’s salvation and the spiritual glory of His Son.

It is hard to prove a negative, yet we can show that the definition is utterly fallacious and unscriptural.

As to the word Church or *Ecclesia*, all will admit that it means (1) generally, an assembly; (2) technically, an assembly of God's people; an organized company of men and women who have been called out and separated through grace, by the Holy Spirit, from the world. (3) The body of which Christ is the head, and which consists of those whom Christ loves and for whom he gave himself. This body was purchased with his own blood, and is the General Assembly and the Church of the first born. So far there is no room for difference of opinion.

Again, this very word, *Ecclesia*, is used to designate God's people in Old Testament times. "In the Church I will sing praise to thee." Christ also speaks of a Jewish *Ecclesia* before the day of Pentecost, before which an offending brother was to be brought. And the corresponding words, *Adah* and *Kahal*, or congregation, is in the Old Testament the common appellation for God's covenant people in their corporate aspect with their divinely appointed officers, just as *Ecclesia* is the appellation for the covenant people in the New Testament in their corporate character.

Such is the Scripture usage of the words. They are applied invariably in their technical sense to God's people as organized either spiritually or visibly; but never in a single instance are they limited to the fraction of God's redeemed ones who live between the day of Pentecost and the Coming. Nor can a shadow of warrant be found for limiting the word, Church, so as to exclude

*Ecclesia*,  
Acts xix. 3  
and 41.

Rev. i. 11.  
Acts xi. 22  
xiii. 1.

Eph. v. 25.  
Acts xx. 28  
Heb. xii. 23

Acts vii. 3  
Ps. xxii. 22  
compare  
with Heb  
ii. 12.

Matt. xvii  
17.

Ex. xii. 19.  
Lev. iv. 15

Num. xii  
20.

1 Cor. i. 2.

from it any one for whom Christ died and who is saved by His spirit.

That there is a difference between the saint of the Old Testament and that of the New Testament is asserted in Scripture. The Christian Church is far in advance of the Jewish, and the individual Church mem-

ber enjoys higher privileges. The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than the great John Baptist. Without us Christians, Old Testament saints could not be

made perfect. Christianity is Judaism fully developed.

In Christ the law and the prophets are fulfilled. But in perfect harmony with this advance, the Apostle who founded the Church among the Gentiles declares that

in his doctrine "he said nothing outside of what the prophets said was coming to pass, and Moses." The

Church of Moses and the prophets, is Christ's Church.

The God of Jew and Christian is the same God, their

Saviour is the same, their Sanctifier and guide the same;

the faith that justifies the same; the blood that cleanses

the same. The law that made the difference between

Jew and Gentile is *done away*, and the believing portion

of the Jews, together with believing Gentiles, now form

the Church of God. There are not two Churches but

one.

But we may shortly examine the passages adduced in support of the idea that the Church began at Pentecost, and will be complete at the coming of the Lord for his saints.

1. Great stress is laid on the Church being called a bride—a wife, and Christ a bridegroom—a husband. But how this figure, expressive of unity,

and reciprocal love *can limit* the privilege which it symbolizes *to the period* between Pentecost and the second coming does not appear. Nay, a very slight acquaintance with the figurative language of scripture shows that Jehovah-Jesus, or the Son of God, before his incarnation was married to his covenant people ; calls himself husband and bridegroom ; claims the Jewish Church as betrothed, espoused, married to him, and charges her with spiritual adultery when she forsakes him. Every figure expressive of endearment and special attachment, which is used in reference to Christ and the New Testament Church is applied to Jehovah-Jesus and the Old Testament Church. So far therefore is the use of these figures from showing that the Christian Church is other than the Jewish, that they prove the very opposite ; both are included in the Bride of the Lamb, the wife of Jehovah-Jesus, whom he loves with a special love, and redeems by his word and spirit. The covenant people of old are as dear to their Saviour, the Son of God, as those living under the Gospel dispensation, and have an equal interest in his person and his love, and in all the privileges secured by covenant through his obedience and death.

Jer. iii. 14.  
ii. 2.  
Isa. liv. 5.  
lxii. 5.  
Hos. ii. 19.  
Ezek. xvi.  
Mal. ii. 11.

2. We are next told that the Church of Christ is a *mystery* which was unknown in former ages, and was for the first time revealed to Christ's apostles by the Holy Ghost. We turn to the passages in which this New Testament mystery is spoken of, and by careful study ascertain not, that "the existence, calling and glory of the Church of God is the mystery ;" but that the truth that Jew and Gentile should be saved in the same way,

Eph. iii. 32.

and form one Church in Christ, is the mystery. "God  
 "by revelation made known (to Paul) the mystery, which  
 "in other ages was not made known unto the sons of  
 "men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and  
 "prophets by the Spirit; *that the Gentiles should be*  
 "*fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his pro-*  
*mise in Christ by the Gospel.*" The Jews had had for  
 ages the promise made to Abraham in covenant, and by  
 virtue of it, an inheritance which belonged to Israel as a  
 body. They thought that none but a circumcised per-  
 son—a Jew—could partake of these privileges. In this  
 they were wrong. Christ came to take away the wall of  
 partition, to make both Jew and Gentile one, not by  
 setting up a new body, or giving a new promise, or ob-  
 taining a new inheritance; but by putting the believing  
 Gentile, without his becoming a Jew, into the body of  
 God's people or Church, and bestowing on him an interest  
 in the Jewish promise and Jewish inheritance. The  
 covenant with Abraham is the covenant under which  
 God's people now are, and it is by the seed of Abraham  
 and union with him that all New Testament blessings  
 are obtained. This *doctrine* was a mystery—that is  
 something unknown if it had not been revealed—and the  
 proclamation of it belonged peculiarly to Paul as the  
 apostle of the Gentiles. It was opposed by the Jews,  
 who insisted on the observance of the law of Moses by  
 believing Gentiles as a condition of their partaking in  
 the promise and the inheritance, and maintained that  
 otherwise Gentiles were *without* the covenant and the  
 body of God's people. Peter proclaimed this doctrine  
 or mystery on the day of Pentecost. "The promise," he

said, "is to you, and to your children, and to all that are *"afar off."* Again when Cornelius and his family were baptised by the Holy Ghost, the admission of Gentiles to Jewish privileges was approved by the Jewish believers. The doctrine was formulated at the great council of Jerusalem, and every where it was proclaimed, to the disgust of the legally-minded Jew, and to the comfort of every penitent Gentile.

Acts. x. 47  
xi. 17, 18.

Acts. xv. 2  
11, 20.  
Gal. v. 1. v  
15.

In like manner in these passages: "This, the mystery is great, but I speak of Christ and his Church;" and "Great is the mystery of Godliness, God manifest *"in the flesh;"* the "mystery" cannot, without criminal wresting of God's Word, be made to mean the Church. In the one passage it is the mystical union of Christ and his Church that is the mystery, something we could not have conjectured, dared not have thought possible, had it not been told us. In the other it is the union of Christ's divine and human nature that is the mystery, underlying as it does all godliness.

Eph. v. 2  
32.  
1 Tim. ii  
16.

3. A third passage is adduced to establish a distinction between the Church and the rest of mankind.

"Giving none offence, neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." The argument is this: Here the Holy Ghost divides all mankind into three classes, viz: the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church. *Therefore* no one can belong to any two of these classes; and consequently Jews cannot be of the Church, and Gentiles cannot be of the Church. Brethren or Christians are not Jews nor Gentiles, but something distinct and by themselves—*God's Church*. How conclusive! Let us now turn to the passage. The

1 Cor. x. 3

apostle we find is speaking of certain practices by which some might be offended and thus kept out of the Church, or injured in their Christian life. A believing Jew, a *brother*, might be offended by finding that he is to be deprived of certain privileges which he had heretofore enjoyed; for example, of the ordinance of circumcision or of the feast of thanksgiving. Or the Gentile might be offended by finding some restrictions forced upon him; as the observance of the new moon or a prohibition to use pork. Or one already within the Church might be offended by the adoption of some new regulation or rite which seemed necessary to the brethren. What should be done in these circumstances? The answer is "Give no offence to any of them." Circumcise the Jewish child and let him attend the feast of tabernacles: let the Gentile work away on the new moon and eat pork: let the Church-man have liberty and do not *force* conformity. This is the spirit which the freedom of the Gospel requires. And the apostle charges the Corinthians not to give offence to any one, whether his prejudices arise from being a Jew, or from being a Gentile, or from conscience as a Christian. This and no more is the meaning of the text. But how can that prove that the Church begins at Pentecost and continues on earth till the second coming, a body distinct from Jew and Gentile?

Besides, the idea of Jews and Gentiles not being in the Church is opposed to express Scripture. Paul said to Peter years after Pentecost, "Thou *being a Jew*, livest after the manner of Gentiles;" and to the Ephesians, "That ye walk not henceforth as *other Gentiles*." There were then Jewish christians

and Gentile Christians, but both in the Church. All men are either Jews or Gentiles, and all men are either in the Church or out of it. But a man may be in the Church and still be a Jew, or in the Church and still be a Gentile. The Church does not exclude Jews or Gentiles, but includes some of both.

Church membership puts Jew and Gentile on the same level of privilege, so that in Christ there is neither Jew Col. iii. 11. nor Greek, just as in Him there is neither male nor female, bond nor free. But as men continue men, and women continue women, when they join the Church of Christ; and as slaves continue slaves, and freemen, freemen after they join the Church; so Jews continue Jews, and Gentiles, Gentiles. How absurd it would be to say that all mankind are either men or women or Christians, meaning that Christians are not men or women; and that all men are either bond or free or Christians, meaning that if they are Christians, they are neither bond nor free, and yet that is the very argument of Plymouthism. A man is either a Jew, or a Gentile, or a church-man; and if he is a church-man, he is not a Jew or a Gentile.

But we are not satisfied with disproving the assertion that the Church of God excludes Old Testament saints; we proceed to show that the theory is in direct opposition to the Word of God, which teaches that *the Church under both dispensations is one and the same glorious body, united by the Holy Spirit and faith to Jehovah-Jesus as its head.*

In the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans Rom. xi. the relation of the Jews and Gentiles to the Church is

ts xxviii. 28. formally discussed. Israel had been God's people, but they had stumbled and fallen from their privilege. Yet were they not utterly rejected, only through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles, and they will be received again to the favor of God; which event will be as life from the dead. God's covenant people is then likened to an olive tree, once flourishing with a holy root and holy branches. Surely this is the Jewish Church on the abiding stock of the promise made to the seed of Abraham. Some branches are now broken off, but the root remains; and on that root there is still a remnant of the branches. That is, the great mass of the people of Israel are cut off from the covenant of promise on account of their unbelief, but a remnant according to the election of grace continues in covenant through faith in Jesus. The converts on the day of Pentecost were not separated from the covenant, but continued in it. Thus the Old Testament Church is not extinct. Next some branches are taken from a wild olive and are grafted into the stock which has the branches, and they grow up among the natural branches. That is, a multitude of Gentiles are by faith united to Christ and put into his Church, and so become one with the Old Testament Church, and share with the believing Jews the blessing of Abraham. We have now the *original holy root*, bearing luxuriant branches, some natural and by origin holy, others wild and by origin unclean; and now together they form but one tree, and that the same tree as formerly, only there has been a change among the branches; some have been broken off and others have been grafted in. That is, we have

ts iii. 25; xxi. 20.

the original covenant people of God, embracing some of the original holy Jews and others who were originally unclean Gentiles, but all forming one Church, and that Church the same as before; only there has been a change in its constituent membership, some of the Jews have been cut off by unbelief, and some Gentiles have been grafted in by faith. All the branches partake alike of the root and fatness of the Olive. That is, all Christians, Jews and Gentiles alike, receive supplies of grace and privilege through their connection with the Church of God, by the indwelling Spirit, and all united together form the one tree, *i. e.*, the one Church. Acts xxvi.  
28.

Nothing can more clearly teach that the Church of God is formed on the covenant promise made to the Seed of Abraham; that all who have the faith of Abraham are in the Church whether Jew or Gentile, there is no difference; that unbelief cuts off from, and faith unites to, the Church of God; and that the only way by which the unbelieving Jews can be restored to the church privileges which they have lost, is by believing on Jesus, the seed of Abraham. In event of which, we are told, they will be grafted in again, and form with the believing Gentiles, the glorious Church of the future.

Other passages bear abundant witness to this fundamental doctrine of the unity of the Church in all ages. The Gospel was preached to Abraham; he saw Christ's day and was glad: he was justified by faith: they that are of faith are blessed with him, are his seed, and heirs of the promise. Jesus says that he has other sheep not of the Jewish fold; these also he must bring; they shall hear his voice, that is believe the Gospel call, and Jno. viii.  
Gal. iii. 8,  
14, 29.  
Rom. iv.  
John x. 16

make *one* flock as there is *one* shepherd, that is, *one* Church, for which the *one* good shepherd gave his life.

Once more, the Plymouth assertion, *that the Holy Ghost was not given unto men until the day of Pentecost, and will be withdrawn again from earth when the Church is taken up, alike does violence to Scripture and to the analogy of Faith.* It is strange how men, unless for a purpose, can overlook the manifest distinction between a *dispensation* of the Spirit and the *work* of the Spirit. The first means a *spiritual economy* as contrasted with the Jewish dispensation of symbolism, which our Lord clearly asserts when he says, "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain (Gerizim) nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth," (not in ceremonies and shadows). The second is the conversion and sanctification of individual believers. The theory which we oppose confounds these two things, and asserts that because at Pentecost the spiritual dispensation began, therefore the work of the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of Grace, was unknown before that time. It also implies that souls, (though not of the Church), were saved in times past without the *gracious* work of the Spirit as now exercised; and that others will be so saved hereafter when the Holy Ghost has been withdrawn from earth. Thus it teaches conversion and salvation without the *gracious* operation of the Holy Ghost.

It were an easy task to multiply passages which show that the saints of old were renewed by the

John iv. 21,  
23.

11. 10, 12.  
10. i. 23.

Spirit's work, and that the gifts of inspired men were associated with the impartation of the Holy Spirit of God; just as now, when men are saved by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and when all the gifts of the Church are said to be wrought by one and the same Spirit. But it seems unnecessary to do this. We shall only assert, what every Bible student knows, that all God's people in every age had the Spirit of God; that, being dead in sin, by His operation alone they were made alive, received grace, and were enabled to exercise faith in God's salvation as revealed; and that *everyone* in all the ages who thus has the spirit of God, is a son of God, one of the Church for which Christ died, a partaker of the Holy Ghost and an heir of the heavenly inheritance, quite as much as the most eminent saint of this nineteenth century. God's church is one grand unity, of which Jehovah-Jesus is the head; united to Him by faith and the abiding of the Holy Ghost. It reaches from righteous Abel, through Patriarchial, Mosaic, and Christian dispensations, down to the last man, who shall obey the Gospel call and enter by faith into the enjoyment of God's salvation. Then, when complete, it shall be presented to the Father to the praise of the glory of his grace, accepted in the Beloved.

Thus far the theory has been disproved; and the opposite truth, viz.: the unity of God's people in all ages in the Church, has been demonstrated from Scripture. The limited definition which excludes from the Church all but believers between Pentecost and the second coming, is therefore to be rejected and condemned.

Zech. iv. 6.  
Ex. xxxi. 1.  
Num. xi. 17.

1 Cor. xii. 13.

Rom. viii. 9, 14.  
Jer. xxxi. 1.

There is not a single passage of scripture in which it is even apparently stated ; it is contrary to the plain teaching of many texts ; and it contravenes the fundamental doctrine of salvation through faith, and by the gracious operation of the Holy Ghost. The definition is a purely human invention, devised for a purpose, to bolster up a theory which rends God's Church into fragments, and exalts a small portion of the redeemed, making the Christian brethren greatest in the kingdom of heaven. We have done with this part of our subject, and bidding an agreeable farewell to the man-devised, narrowed Church of pre-millenarianism, we proceed to examine the definitions it gives of

## II. THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The general dominion and rule which God maintains over all his creatures, and over man in particular, is not in dispute. We all admit that Jehovah reigneth, that the Lord ruleth in heaven, in earth, and in the abyss ; that he is "the King eternal, immortal and invisible, the only wise God." The *new view* which we controvert is, that *God has an earthly kingdom*, which is not the Church, *which is now in abeyance or in mystery, but which will be again established or manifested, when our Lord shall come as the SON OF MAN to take the kingdom and reign in bodily presence in Jerusalem.*

This kingdom, we are told, formerly had an existence in the nation of Israel. God reigned over Israel during the administration of Moses, Joshua, the Judges and the Kings of Judah and Israel. On account of the

wickedness of the nation, God literally *removed his throne* Ezek. xi. 23. from Jerusalem, sent the king into captivity, and *transferred the Kingdom* from the line of David to Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, and his successors in empire. Dan. ii. 37. From that time God's kingdom has been in abeyance, and the "times of the Gentiles" have been running : a kind of historical episode, during which the kingdom is held successively by the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires. The Roman empire still continues and is now supreme, rules over the nations, (!) by God's appointment; and will continue thus to rule till the Son of Man, as the Son of David comes, the literal King of Israel in the flesh, receives the kingdom, and by carnal war destroys his enemies.

We are also told, that eighteen hundred years ago Jesus of Nazareth, the true literal King of Israel after the flesh, came to his people; and that if they had received Him, He would have set up the kingdom then and reigned in person in Jerusalem. But the Jews rejected Him, saying; "We have no king but Cæsar;" and as a consequence the kingdom remains in abeyance, *existing only in mystery, but not actually*, and the dominion continues with the Gentiles. We are further told that when the Lord shall come *with his saints*, the kingdom will reappear, and the Son of man, risen and glorified, shall reign in Jerusalem on the literal throne of David, over restored Israel in the flesh and the subject Gentile nations which shall be alive on the earth at that time.

According to this theory then, the kingdom of God both was in the past and shall be in the future, but has

no actual existence during the dispensation of grace. The kingdom is the people of Israel dwelling as a nation in Palestine, with Jerusalem for metropolis, and having a living son of David in the flesh for king. The rule is a human, natural rule ; the subjects are living men in the flesh, who have been reduced to obedience by carnal weapons and are governed on natural principles, by natural instrumentalities and human agencies. It is as the Son of *man* and the Son of David, not as the Son of God, that Jesus claims the kingdom. It thus appears, to quote again from Mr. Trotter's book, that according to the theory "The Kingdom of Christ's glory as *King* "is treated of in inseparable connection with Israel's "restoration and supremacy, and with the blessing of all "nations ; in a word with the millennium." This definition, like the one we have already considered, is an imperative necessity ; without it the theory could not exist. Observe, if Christ is *now* king and reigns among men, then there can be no coming until in the exercise of his Kingly might he has subdued all his enemies and brought in the millennium of blessing. This doctrine is fatal to the darling idol of the church coming *with* the Lord to *introduce* the millennium and reign with Him. Hence it is indispensable to have such a definition of the kingdom framed as will admit of a coming *for* the saints at some time before the millennium, so that they may be ready to come *with* the Lord, at a later period, when the kingdom shall appear, and the millennial reign shall begin. Let us now enquire how far this definition of the theory agrees with scripture and common sense, or is repugnant to both.

1. The idea of God transferring *his* kingdom to Nebuchadnezzar and his Gentile successors, is without scriptural foundation, and utterly absurd. Satan is the prince of this world, and God *permits* him to exercise a usurped dominion; but it would outrage all our Christian instincts to allege on that ground, that God had transferred his rule to Satan. So to assert, that because God's people for their sins were forsaken by Him, and delivered up into the hands of their enemies, therefore, God's kingdom was transferred to the Gentiles, is a patent absurdity. God allows the world to oppress his Church and punish her, but the sceptre has not passed from His hand to that of his enemies. Neither Nebuchadnezzar's nor Nero's empire was God's kingdom. Luke iv. 6

Nor do the passages quoted in support give any countenance to the monstrous assertion. The prophet Ezekiel had a *vision*, in which he saw the Shechinah leave Jerusalem and rest on the mountain to the east of the city. But it was not seen to leave the earth, or even Palestine; far less was it transferred to Babylon, or taken up to heaven, as our theorists assert. Besides, it is well to observe that the whole passage is a record of a *vision* merely; it is not history. Hence the theory has no historical basis on which to rest; it rests on visions; and in two senses is *visionary*, a pure fiction. In the other passage referred to, God is said to have given Nebuchadnezzar "a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory," just as elsewhere he is said "to set one up, and put another down," and as by Him all kings rule. But it is not said to be *God's kingdom* that was given him. Now it is expressly foretold that the God Ezek. xi. 2  
Dan. ii. 37  
Dan. ii. 21

an. ii. 44. of heaven shall set up his kingdom, in the days of *those* kings, including Nebuchadnezzar, and that it shall break in pieces, and consume all those kingdoms. So that the kingdom of God is not superseded by the kingdoms of the Gentiles, nor to be manifested when they have run their course, but is cotemporaneous with them, and is to endure after them. The idea of *transference*, therefore is as unscriptural as absurd. It is a mere dream, grasped at to support a baseless theory.

mes of  
the Gen-  
tiles.

Again, the expression, "Times of the Gentiles," is according to the theory, the ages during which the Gentiles have the dominion, while God's kingdom is in abeyance, viz., from the time of Nebuchadnezzar till our Lord's coming *with* the Saints to establish the millennium. The slightest investigation shows how unscriptural and absurd this interpretation is. The expression occurs only once, when Jesus, speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, says, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of  
like xxi. 24 "the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

v. xi. 2.

In a parallel passage the apocalyptic seer had a reed given him like unto a rod, and the angel stood saying "Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple, leave out and measure it not, for it is given unto the Gentiles, and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." This is all that Scripture says of the "Times of the Gentiles." and a reference to Nebuchadnezzar and the Medes, is to say the least, far-fetched; while the assertion that it means that God's kingdom was in the hands of the Gentiles during a period, seems perfect nonsense.

Look at the passages, and say what are these Times? Times of Jerusalem being trodden down by the Gentiles, *i. e.*, of enduring the desolation and ruin which the rejection of the Messiah brought down on the Jews in terrible retribution. While thus they are times of judgment to the Jews, they are to the Gentiles times of blessing: "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, Rom. xi. 12, 25. "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; through "their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles . . . " . . . and their fall is the riches of the world." They are times of the ingathering of Gentiles, when the blessing of Abraham is enjoyed by them in covenant. But what has all that to do with the transference of God's kingdom to Nebuchadnezzar, or to his successors? The idea of God's kingdom being suspended for 2300 years is mere fiction; it would never have occurred to any one except as a shift to make plausible the Plymouth theory of the kingdom.

2. We may now search and ascertain what the Word of God teaches concerning the main features of the kingdom; and thus we shall see how far the kingdom of the theory corresponds with, or differs from the kingdom of the scripture. The kingdom of heaven or of God—"the kingdom which the God of heaven sets up, Dan. ii. vii. 9, 1 "and which shall never be destroyed," is connected with the coming of the Son of Man, and was established by his incarnation and ascension, and the mission of his Spirit. The following is the witness of scripture, Mal. iii. iv. 5. "Behold "I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way "before me, and the Lord whom ye seek shall come suddenly to his temple; even the messenger of the coven-

"ant, whom ye delight in, behold he shall come, saith  
 "the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his  
 "coming ! Behold I send you Elijah the prophet, be-  
 "fore the coming of the great and dreadful day of the  
 "Lord." So spake the last of the prophets. Zachariah  
 takes up the long silent strain, and rejoicing over the  
 birth of that forerunner, sings, "Blessed be the Lord  
 "God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his  
 "people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for  
 "us in the house of his servant David, as he spake by  
 "the mouth of his holy prophets . . . that we  
 "should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand  
 "of those that hate us, . . . and thou child  
 "shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, for thou  
 "shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his  
 "way." And our Lord says, "This was Elias which  
 was for to come." Hear then this prophet in the  
 wilderness of Judea, "The voice of one crying, prepare  
 "ye the way of the Lord ; repent for the *kingdom of*  
 "*Heaven is at hand.*" Jesus reiterates the good tidings,  
 "*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.*"  
 He preaches, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs  
 "is (not shall be) the kingdom of heaven." He declares  
 that something more than a legal righteousness is re-  
 quired to enter it ; that those who possess that righteous-  
 ness are blessed in the present possession of the king-  
 dom ; that a man must be born again in order to see it  
 or enter it ; that while he spoke it was among the  
 people, and had come upon them, and that some "stand-  
 "ing there " and listening to him should not 'taste of  
 "death' till they should 'see the kingdom of God come

uke i 68  
to 76.

att. xi. 14.

att. iii. 2,3

ark i. 15.

att. v. 3,  
0, 20.

in iii. 3, 5  
ke xviii.  
; xi. 20.

ke ix. 27.  
rk ix. 1.

“*with power.*” The apostles also preached the Gospel of the kingdom, as the good tidings of a blessing then enjoyed by all who believed in Christ Jesus. Acts viii. 12; xix. 8; xiv. 22; xxviii. 23, 31.

Surely it requires no argument to prove that these sayings of the apostles and prophets, and still more of our Lord himself, cannot be construed as teaching that there was no kingdom of God *actually existing* then, but that it should continue in abeyance, and exist only in mystery for at least 1800 years after the ascension. A theory which teaches this, evidently contradicts God’s work.

Our pre-millenarian friends further insist that God’s kingdom is *earthly*, (“among the earthlies, as the church is “among the heavenlies,” so they talk,) not heavenly; a reign over Israel according to the flesh and living Gentiles, not over the spiritual Israel; a natural kingdom *of this world*, not spiritual, and above the world. Nay, they delight in drawing a vivid contrast between the “heavenly hope” of their so called Church, and the “earthly hope” of Israel restored in the millennial era. Thus their kingdom in its nature is of this world and carnal. But surely this is utterly opposed to the declaration of Jesus, who standing before the Roman governor, avowed that he *was then* a king, but added, John xvii. 36, 37. “My kingdom is *not of this world*; if my kingdom were “of this world, then would my servants fight,” (with carnal weapons;) this kingdom “is not from hence,” and is not to be established by natural instrumentality, but by witnessing for the truth. The apostle also explicitly says, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the 1 Cor. xv. 50. “kingdom of God;” and certainly that annihilates the

Millenarian fancy of Israel in the flesh, and living Gentile nations forming the kingdom of God.

Matt. xxi.  
43.

Once more, our Lord says, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you (Jews), and be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof; and many shall

Matt. viii.  
11.

"come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom should be cast out." These passages show conclusively that the Jews had the kingdom while Jesus spoke, but were to be deprived of it through their unbelief. They as conclusively disprove the theory, that the Gentiles had then and have now the kingdom, and that it will be restored to Israel at the millennium.

Time will not permit a full reference to the favorite phrase, "The kingdom in mystery." It certainly serves to veil the subject in mist, and to hide from view the glaring defects of the theory, and thus those who are befogged by the "mystery" cannot see clearly; so far for its mistiness. The phrase *never occurs* in scripture. The only place where anything like it is found, speaks of

Mark iv. 11.

the "mystery of the kingdom," not the kingdom in mystery. Properly interpreted, in that passage the

Matt. xiii.  
11, 16.

phrase means the secret things of the kingdom which were hid from others but revealed to the apostles. Nor can the phrase be twisted to mean, "the kingdom not *actually* existing, but in abeyance, or in mystery." As this pet phrase is unscriptural, so is the idea which the theory attaches to it; both are devices of men, calculated to bewilder and mislead from the plain teaching of God's word.

We need go no further on this point. We have

proved that the kingdom of the theory, which is still in the future, and is over living man in the flesh, with its earthliness and carnal glory, is not the kingdom which Jesus established eighteen hundred years ago, whose subjects are born again by the spirit of God, which is even now the blessed possession of all who believe, both Jew and Gentile, and of which there is to be no end. Thus then we are brought to

### III. THE COMING OF THE LORD.

On this point we are told that there is nothing to prevent the Lord from coming to day; nay, this very hour; and that the scripture teaches His saints continually to expect Him as the early apostles and early christians did. Great use is made of this. "looking for the Lord," and it is paraded as an evidence of peculiar earnestness and pre-eminent spirituality. Weighing the statement with care we cannot help asking: If nothing prevents the Lord's coming, why in the name of common sense, does He not come? Something has so far prevented and still is preventing the coming. It cannot take place until the fulness of the time appointed by God. True, no man knows the day or the hour; and he is a fool who would attempt to set the time, as in the past some have found to their shame.

The above statement, besides being nonsensical, contradicts the scripture; in as much as according to scripture the apostles expected to die, and were not looking daily for Christ's coming. Paul speaks of his *departure*, meaning his death, as being at hand and looked for by him; he had a desire to depart and to be

Acts. xx. 2  
29.  
Rom. xiv.  
Phil. i. 23.

2 Tim. iv. 6 with Christ ; was ready to be offered, and only wished  
Phil. i. 20. to finish his course with joy, and to magnify the Lord by  
his death as well as his life.

John. xxi. 19. In like manner our Lord spoke "of the death by  
3 Pet. i. 14, 15 " which Simon Peter was to glorify God ; and that apostle  
" knew that shortly he *must put off his tabernacle*, and  
" wished after his *decease* certain things to be remem-

John xxi. 23 "bered." So also the apostle John took pains to cor-  
rect a saying that had gone abroad among the brethren  
to the effect that Christ would come before he died.

1 Jas. iv. 13, 15. And James in his epistle when censuring the making  
of unconditional arrangements for the future, tells us to  
add, " If the Lord will, *we shall live* and do this or  
"that;" not in the affected language of some who profess  
a love for Jesus warmer than others and a more ardent  
desire for his coming, we shall do this or that, unless  
the Lord come before the time.

Thus then it appears that the apostles expected  
death, and the expectation of the coming held by the  
Brethren has not a single text to warrant it. They  
have fallen into the error of the Thessalonians, so  
promptly corrected by the apostle when he told them  
27 11 Thes. ii. 2 " not to be shaken in mind or troubled, as that the day of  
" the Lord was at hand or upon them ;" and charged  
them to " let no man deceive them by any means," on  
this subject.

That the Coming of our Lord is in the future,  
and will be personal, Evangelical christians believe and  
teach. " The same Jesus who was taken up from be-  
Acts. i. 11. Matt. xxvi. 64. Lev. i. 7. " fore the eyes of the gazing disciples into heaven, shall  
" so come in like manner again. He will come in per-

“son in clouds, and every eye shall see Him” when He comes. This is the old doctrine, the uniform tradition of the churches of Christ. But *new* doctrines have been added which are to be rejected. Our theorists tell us of *two* comings; first a coming *for* the saints, and then a coming *with* the saints, with an interval of at least seven years between. The proof for this double coming is an *inference*, to the effect: that, if at His appearing the Lord is to bring the saints *with* Him, *there must have been a previous coming for them* when they were caught up to be with Him. The new doctrine is set forth on this point in a way more than ordinarily confused and confounding. We are told that at the first coming Christ comes as the Son of God and the bridegroom, but at the second as the Son of Man and king; that the seventieth week of Daniel and the great tribulation are part of the interval between the comings; that the first coming is the appearing of the morning star, and the second the rising of the sun of righteousness, with the darkest hour of the night between; and that the first coming will be invisible and only into the air, but the second will be seen by all men, and Jesus shall come to earth. This, and other such nonsense, is uttered to enforce a distinction unknown to the word of God and is taught with much assurance as the very truth of God. To redargue every statement would be tedious, and of no real service; we shall only in a few words call attention to the fact, that the *Son of God* is not spoken of as coming except for the Incarnation\*—when the second

1 Thes. iv. 14.

Dan. ix. 27; xii. 1.

Rev. xxii. 16, 17.  
Mal. iv. 2.

1 Thes. iv. 17.

Mark xiv. 62.  
Luke xxii. 69.

\* 1 Thess. i. 10, is only an apparent exception to this statement, for though “His” refers to God, the *title* “Son of God” does not occur.

coming is referred to He is called the Son of Man and the Lord; to the irrelevant insertion of the text from Daniel into a passage from Thessalonians without a shadow of warrant, and solely in order to make out a theory; to the linking together of Revelation and Malachi, putting the last first and the first last, to serve a purpose, without regard to time or matter, and to the deliberate assertion as God's truth of a thing not found in scripture, while its contrary is, viz., that the coming will be invisible and only into the air. The whole statement has not a vestige of scripture to justify it; it is a piece of bold handling of the word of God, and an ingenious fiction purposely devised by men who are wise above what is written. It is the duty of every reverent student of scripture to reject the theory and reprobate such a method of interpretation.

Another distinction of vital importance to the theory is that drawn between the *coming* of the Lord, and the *day* of the Lord. We are told "that the coming of our Lord and our gathering together unto him," is a distinct event, separated by a considerable interval from "the day of the Lord;" that during the interval by which these events are separated, the judgment of the saints, who have been caught up, and their marriage, as the Church, with the Lamb, shall take place; that the Old Testament saints shall be raised from the dead, and also such of the faithful remnant as suffered martyrdom during the great tribulation which followed the ascent of the Church with the Holy Spirit; that during the same interval on the church of Christendom shall utterly apostatize, Antichrist be revealed,

2 Thess. ii.

1. Cor. xv.

23.

2 Thess. ii.

8; i. 7-10.

the Jews return to Palestine, rebuild Jerusalem, make a covenant with Antichrist, and be persecuted by the beast for three and a half years. The *coming*, we are 2Thess.i.10. further told, is *invisible*, on the other hand the *day* is the *Revelation, the Epiphany, the "Brightness"* of the coming. Now it is well to notice that the only reason given for the above interval and distinction resolves itself into this; *there must be* such an interval and distinction, or the theory is wrong, which expects the Lord to come Rev. xx. 4. before the millennium. In other words the interval and distinction have been devised to make plausible a pre-millennium advent. They are an absolute necessity to the new doctrine; for if the Lord does not come until the *day*, the coming is post-millennial.

We shall now examine, if scripture can be so interpreted as to support the theory. In so doing we shall make it appear that, according to the Word of God *the coming of the Lord and the day of the Lord are one, and the same event; and that there is no interval of time between them.* If this is done, the theory falls of itself, for the props on which it rests are struck away.

When Jesus had foretold the approaching desolation Matt. xxiii. 39. of Jerusalem, he ended by speaking of his *coming*. Going out of the city, he sat down with his disciples on the Mount of Olives, and in answer to these questions, "*When shall these things be?*"—the destruction of Matt. xxiv. 3. Jerusalem—"and *what shall be the sign of the coming* "and of the end of the age?" he foretold his *coming*, as like the "lightning coming out of the east and shin- Matt. xxiv. 27. ing to the west"—that is, all pervading—"as like to the "days of Noe," an event unexpected by the world; as at-

Matt. xxiv. tended with the punishment of the evil servant; and as  
 37-39; 44-  
 50; 30; & "in the clouds of heaven with power and great  
 xxv. 31. glory." Here the very word (*parousia*) is used; and the  
 1 Thess. iv. event signified by the word, and elsewhere associated  
 14.  
 2 Thess. ii. with "our (the Church's) gathering together unto him,"  
 1. —which, according to the theory, affects only the Church,  
 and is invisible, and for the saints, is represented as like  
 lightning—all pervading; as coming on *the world* in its  
 sinful pleasures; as associated with judgment and  
 punishment. How then can it be invisible, and only a  
 coming *for the saints*, unseen and unfelt by the world?

Again the "Epiphany," which is according to the  
 theory, the same as the day of the Lord, when he comes  
 with his saints, and when the wicked living nations are  
 2 Tim. iv. 8. to be judged, is spoken of by Paul as the "blessed hope,"  
 and the day in which he should receive the crown. Is  
 Paul then not to be one of the Church? Is he not to  
 arise and be rewarded when Christ comes *for the*  
 saints? And must he wait for his crown till all the  
 events of the interval have transpired, till the Epiphany,  
 when the Lord comes *with the saints*? Surely the  
 theory is at fault.

Further, the "revelation," and the "appearing"  
 of our Lord Jesus Christ is everywhere spoken of  
 as the time when the Christian's hope shall be  
 realized, when we "shall be found unto praise, and  
 Pet. i. 7, 13  
 Cor. i. 7, 8.  
 Col. iii. 4.  
 John iii. 2  
 Thess. ii.  
 7, 8. "honour, and glory; when we shall appear with him  
 "in glory; shall be like him, for we shall see him as he  
 is." But it is also the time "when the Lord Jesus  
 "shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels  
 "in flaming fire, taking vengeance," etc. Scripture thus

teaches not *two* appearings, but *one event*, bringing glory to the saint, and judgment to the sinner. The coming and the appearing of the Lord are one.

Yet further: "The *day* of the Lord" is spoken of as a time of "saving," of "rejoicing" for the apostle and his converts; strictly parallel with the *coming* of the Lord. At the same time the day is said "to come as a thief in the night" for destruction, when "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and all that is therein, shall be burnt up." Passages to the same effect might be multiplied, but it is unnecessary. Every candid reader must admit that there are *not two* days referred to, one of blessing when Christ comes *for* the saints, and another of judgment, when he comes *with* the saints, but *one*. God's Word knows but one day. It teaches no intervening period such as the theory has devised.

We find then that according to Scripture, the Coming, the Epiphany, the Appearing, the Revelation of Jesus Christ, and the Day of the Lord, are one and the same event; a time of joy, an object of hope for the Christian, and a time of wrath and an object of fear to the wicked. The fancied distinction disappears when the light of God's word is brought to bear upon it; and the interpolated period of heavenly appraisals, marriages and resurrections vanishes with it. These are dreams which men may entertain, when they walk in the dark light of pious imaginings, but which are dissipated when men awake to walk in the light of God's word. Is it not wonderful how good men have been deceived by the

1 Cor. v. 5.  
2 Cor. i. 14.  
1 Thess. ii. 19.  
1 Thess. v. 2, 3.  
2 Pet. iii. 10.  
Phil. i. 6;  
ii. 16.  
2 Tim. iv. 8.  
1 Cor. i. 8;  
2 Tim. i. 12.  
Matt. vii. 22.  
Rom. ii. 5-16.

phantom? The explanation is easy: they have not searched the word of God, but have believed others who have constructed an ingenious theory which flatters the pride of self-righteous sensuous men.

#### IV. THE JUDGMENT.

Not less fallacious and unscriptural are the definitions and distinctions of the theory regarding judgment.

1. The Church we are told is *never to be judged*, for the saints were judged when Jesus died, and there is now "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

The Church is only manifested, or *appears* IN ITS CORPORATE CAPACITY !! "before the judgment seat, to have the work of the individual saints *appraised*. This takes place, we are told, in heaven after the ascent of the Church and before her marriage, whatever that may mean. The Old Testament saints and the faithful remnant also enjoy some such privileges of appraisal and reward, but before they come *with* the Lord to introduce the millennial kingdom. Surely it is sufficient for the refutation of this vain imagining simply to state, that when we "appear before the judgment seat," it is

expressly stated to be in order that "every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, *whether it be good or bad*." To receive according to our *bad deeds* cannot mean, to have our good works appraised and rewarded. To teach this and to exclude from this text the idea of *sentence* and retribution, is to handle God's word deceitfully, and to take from what is written therein; and let those who do so beware of the threatened consequence. Besides, there

is not a single text that even hints at a judgment seat *in heaven*, or a marriage *there*; or appraisal *there*. These are each and all of them pure imaginings of dreaming men, who, finding that scripture is against their dreams, presumptuously wrest the texts and supply *what they think must take place*, where scripture is silent.

2. We are next told, that when the "Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the Holy Angels with him, Matt. xxv. 31. then he shall sit on the throne of his glory," as *King*—meaning that he was not king before this; that when it is said, "before him shall be gathered *all nations*," it means the *living* Gentiles; not *all* Gentiles, only those living at the end of the great tribulation, and not the Jews; and that the ground of commendation or rejection, "Inasmuch as ye did it, or did it not to the least Mat. xxv. 45 of *these*, ye did or did it not unto me," has reference to the manner in which the living Gentile nations had treated the faithful Jewish remnant during the interval between the coming *for* and coming *with* the saints. In order to do this consistently it is necessary to explain the whole prophecy where the judgment scene occurs Matt. chps xxiv. & xxv as not referring to Christians. Mr. Kelly does not hesitate to do this. He says, "Our Lord does not as "yet unfold here the portion of us Christians, but "takes up the disciples where they were. They were "believing godly Jews. . . . The disciples are "viewed in this chapter, not as the representatives of "us Christians now, but of *future* godly Jews. The "prophecy consists of three great parts. The Jewish "remnant have their history thoroughly described; then

“comes the portion of Christians ; and afterwards that  
“of the Gentiles.” That is to say, the first part from  
chapter xxiv. 4, to end, is a prophecy of the experience of  
the Godly Jews, who shall live after the Church has  
been taken up to heaven ; chapter xxv., from the begin-  
ning to verse 30, refers to the Church or Saints, between  
Penetecost and the second coming ; and the remainder  
of the chapter refers to the Gentile nations living when  
the Lord shall come.

This is a bold step to take, but it must be taken or  
the theory perishes. Time will not allow of a full an-  
swer to this exposition ; it is enough to show in a few  
particulars that it is utterly contrary to the rest of the  
word of God ; for the pious student will then know that  
the plain common sense interpretation is the true one,  
and will reject the *new* view. Observe then, that the  
parallel passages in Luke and Mark, put it beyond  
doubt that the destruction of Jerusalem, spoken of by  
Matthew, was that which took place under Titus, “be-  
fore the generation who saw Jesus had passed away,”  
not the assault of Antichrist, which, it is said, shall take  
place between the comings ; that the gospel of the  
kingdom, which was to be preached in all the world be-  
fore the end should come, is the same that Paul and  
the other apostles preached, when they experienced the  
fulfilment of the promise of Christ’s presence with them,  
as they stood before “councils, rulers, and kings ;” not  
another gospel, different from the gospel of the grace  
of God. Therefore the arbitrary assertion that chap-  
ter xxiv. refers to a Jewish remnant in a future  
age, when Jerusalem shall have been rebuilt, and the

ke xxi. 32.  
k xiii. 30.  
tt. xxiv.  
4.  
ts. xx.  
4, 25.  
im. iv. 17.  
rk xiii.  
, 11.  
s xxiii. 1 ;  
xvi. 1.

Jews shall be persecuted as a believing remnant by Antichrist, is an impertinent, presumptuous *adding to the word* of God. It is further to be observed that in the portion, which, according to the theory, refers only to the church and treats of the coming of the bridegroom, the ascent of the saints, the heavenly judgment with awards, and the marriage of the church, we have the judgment and condemnation of "the wicked and slothful servant, and the casting of him into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." This is utterly inconsistent with the *exposition*, and fatal to it. For it cannot be supposed even by a brother, that some hypocrite shall rise from the dead when Christ comes *for* his saints, shall be caught up in the air along with them, and be manifested before the judgment seat in heaven, only to be condemned and cast into outer darkness. Mr. Kelly seems to have felt the difficulty and very discreetly passes over it in his commentary:

Matt. x.  
1-30.

Matt. x.  
25-30.

But there are even more serious objections to this vicious attempt to pervert the teaching of our Lord. What, we ask with indignant anxiety for God's truth, what becomes of the blessed words of hope, "Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," if only the few *Gentile nations* then living, who received the faithful remnant during the tribulation, shall hear these words addressed to them? and if the only kingdom prepared, is to live and prosper in this poor and dying world subject and tributary to the Jews in Palestine? What becomes of the terrible words, which have so often

Matt. x.  
34.

Well may we pause, horror-struck, at such a mode of dealing with God's word, which on the one hand robs Christians of their hope of a heavenly kingdom which God has prepared for them and eternal life, and gives it to Gentiles on earth; and on the other hand annuls the terrors of the Lord by declaring everlasting fire and everlasting punishment to mean the destruction of living nations, but to have no reference to the punishment after death of Gospel hearers who reject Jesus. It is impossible for any seriously minded person to look at this exposition calmly, without rejecting it with abhorrence. Manifestly for a purpose do the theorists insert "*living*" before nations, and restrict the *all*; for a pur-

pose do they palter and trifle with eternal realities, and with the hopes and fears of men. The purpose is to avoid the doctrine of a general judgment of both the righteous and the wicked, because that doctrine is fatal to the darling idol of an invisible coming for the saints and a marriage in heaven. Acts. x  
31.

3. Third in order comes what, in the peculiar nomenclature of the brethren, is termed a *Sessional judgment*. By this is meant the *Rule* of the Saints in the heavenlies, *sitting* as judges or assessors with Jesus, over the twelve tribes of Israel and subject Gentiles in the earthlies. This rule or judgment extends over the long period of a thousand years. Matt. x  
28.  
Rev. xx

Observe how this idea originated. A judgment for *all* men is clearly taught in the Word of God. "WE," Christians, the apostle tells us, as well as sinners, shall stand before the throne of Christ; in the *day* when God shall judge the secrets of men; and "that day is, when the Lord shall be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," *i.e.*, gospel hearers who reject the offer. Thus both christians and rejectors of the gospel are to be judged, and that at Christ's appearing. Now mark, the theory has provided for a special judgment of *the saints* in heaven (although it is no judgment); but that event comes before the appearing of Jesus Christ or *the day* of the theory. Then there will be a second judgment when He comes to earth; but not of saints, for they are already judged; nor of the *wicked dead*, (rejectors of the Gospel, etc.,) for according to the theory they are not to be raised for a thousand years Acts xv  
31.  
Rom. x  
10; ii.  
  
2 Thes  
8-10.

after *the day* when Christ is revealed ; hence the judgment of that day cannot refer to them. Who then are to be judged at the appearing ? Some kind of judgment must be devised to begin with the day of the Lord, which is neither a judgment of the saints at the coming, nor a judgment of the wicked dead at the last day. Hence this *sessional judgment*—a judgment of living nations—a special expedient to meet the requirements of scripture, which demands a judgment of all men, quick and dead. The theory must have one judgment of the saints in heaven, a second of living nations on the earth, and after a thousand years a third, of the wicked dead also upon the earth. Mark well how error leads to error ; one human invention calls for another to sustain it ; a fictitious judgment in heaven necessitates a fictitious judgment on earth ; and a judgment solely of the wicked, necessitates a judgment for those who are not judged as saints, nor yet as wicked men raised from the dead,—a judgment of the living—for otherwise part of the human race would never be judged.

It is not necessary fully to discuss this point. The passages quoted in support of the dogma admittedly establish a reign or rule of the saints, of which we will have more to say hereafter, and a judging of the twelve tribes of Israel ; just as elsewhere it is said, “ the saints shall judge the world and angels.” But to speak of the *reign* of the saints for a thousand years as a judgment, in the same sense as the apostle means, when he speaks of “ as many as have sinned without law, *perishing* without law, (*i.e.* the Gentiles), and as many as have sinned in the law, being *judged* by the law,” (*i.e.* the

Jews), "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of man," is to confound things that differ. Our Lord speaks of "a day of judgment when it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Zidon than for Chorazin, Bethsaida," etc., and Jude foretells in the words of Enoch that "the Lord *cometh* with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all," etc. It is past comprehension how these and many parallel scripture passages can be perverted so as to harmonize with the idea of a sessional judgment of living nations, or a ruling over them. Surely the day of the coming *with* the saints is according to the theory before the millennium; but in that day Gentile and Jew, Tyrian or Zidonian, inhabitant of Chorazin or Bethsaida, and the ungodly in the day of Enoch alike shall be judged—shall perish or be rewarded. This is manifestly something very different from the destruction of living gentile nations, or their blessed condition under the peaceful happy *rule* of the Son of David, and his companion assessors. Surely retributive vengeance is implied in the language both of our Lord and the apostles, and this is manifestly inconsistent with the prolonged government of men in the flesh for thirty generations. We leave the bold invention, so manifestly devised to bolster up a false theory; and, if possible, to prevent men from seeing how irreconcilably opposed to scripture that theory is. A sessional judgment is a misnomer and a delusion.

4. Now we come to the last judgment, the *judgment of the wicked dead*. Note, in passing, the varying meaning which have been given to the word "judgment." First, it is made to mean the manifestation of the Saints

before the seat of Christ in heaven, with the appraisal and reward of their good deeds; then, to mean the plaguing, punishing, and destroying of living gentile nations on earth; next, a peaceful reign and happy rule over Israel and tributary Gentiles on the earth for a thousand years; and now, it means a judicial trial, followed by punishment. What may not scripture be made to say when thus deceitfully handled? In the four different meanings given to the word, and given as the exigencies of the theory demand—the primary idea of judging or *discriminating* does not once appear; and in no two of them is the meaning the same. But to our work.

According to the theory, ages have passed since the Lord came to reign on the earth. Satan has been let loose again, and has deceived the nations. Gog and Magog have compassed Jerusalem, and have been devoured by fire from heaven, and the devil has been cast into the lake of fire. All this has taken place among living men, on the earth. The Jews still live on the earth in Palestine, and the Lord and his saints still reign over the kingdom in the heavenlies. There is no word of any other *coming* of the Lord, no sound of a trumpet, no voice of the Son of man coming in the clouds. All these things occurred more than a thousand years ago. But lo! “A great white throne is seen and one sitting on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was no place found for them;” and adds the Apocalyptic Seer, “I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is

ev. xx. 5  
and seq.

iv. xx. 11.

the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." This, we are told, is the *judgment of the wicked dead*. The church generally in past times has regarded this as a powerful description of the general judgment, at the end of the world, parallel with "the day of the Lord, which comes like a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away . . . the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up; and it is commonly believed that these things will take place when Christ comes the second time; and that the second coming, the end of the world, the last day, and the general judgment are all strictly synchronous. According to the theory the church is in error; for the Lord will have come more than a thousand years before the wicked are judged; the saints too will have been judged; and the living nations likewise. So that it becomes necessary now to limit the "*all the dead, small and great*" to the remnant not already raised; and to add to the word of God by inserting the word "*wicked*" before dead. But why thus restrict and add to God's word? Answer: the theory requires it, therefore it must be done.

But this will not justify such handling of God's word. We have already shown that christians are to be judged as well as others in that day; and that the day will be a time both of punishment and reward; also that the *world* is to be judged then. We now add that when "the Son of man comes with his holy angels

Rev. xx. 15

1 Thess. v. 2  
2 Pet. iii. 10

Rom. xiv. 10  
2 Cor. v. 10

Acts xvii.  
31.

Mark viii. 38  
Matt. x. 33.

he will be ashamed of those who deny him and confess those who confess him." This is certainly not to appraise the deeds of the saints, and reward them more than a thousand years before He condemns the rejectors of the gospel. On the contrary, the solemn scene of presenting his people faultless and receiving them to Himself and of rejecting and destroying his enemies, is one and the same event. Nor will the evasion that a day may mean here, as in the first chapter of Genesis, a long period avail. It ill becomes literalists who say that a thousand years is to be taken literally, to assert that a day is to be taken figuratively, simply because unless thus taken, it will not fit the theory; while, by doing this, events diverse in nature and widely separated in time, are included in one period. There is no scripture warrant for thus interpreting the word, 'day,' nor is such use of the word needed, except to bolster up the theory.

Further disproof of the fiction may be found in considerations like the following : Caiaphas, who condemned Jesus, and the soldiers who pierced him, will certainly be found among the wicked dead, who shall rise at the last judgment; and yet it is expressly said that *they* "shall see Him when He comes in the clouds of heaven."

Matt. xxvi.  
64.  
Rev. i. 7.

This according to the theory would be before the millenium, and thus more than a thousand years before these men were raised from the dead. Surely this is absurd. Again God's word represents the sounding of the trumpet

Rev. xi. 15.

as introducing "the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ," (that is according to the theory, the millennium)

Rev. xi. 18.

and it is immediately added "Thou hast taken thy great

power and hast reigned, and the nations were angry and thy wrath has come, and the time of the *dead*, that they should be judged," (not the living nations) and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear "His name, small and great, and shouldest destroy "them that destroy the earth." If language can teach it, this passage teaches beyond question that the setting up of the kingdom, the sounding of the trumpet, the judging of the dead, the rewarding of the righteous, and destruction of the wicked are *strictly synchronous*; all take place at the same time.

Much more might be added, but every candid student must be satisfied from what has been said, that the fiction of four judgments, stretching over a long period of more than a thousand years, which deal with the race of mankind piece-meal, is alike without scripture foundation, opposed to scripture teaching, and invented by men for the sole purpose of saving a pet theory which flatters the pride of those who consider themselves the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

## V. THE RESURRECTION.

We shall now enquire concerning the *Resurrection of the dead*. According to the theory we have at different times or stages (1) A resurrection of the New Testament saints or church at the coming of the Lord into the air; (2) The resurrection of the Old Testament saints after them but before the day of the Lord; (3) The resurrection of the martyred remnant after they have been beheaded during the great tribulation and before

the day of the Lord when He comes *with* them and the other risen saints. (4) The resurrection of the wicked dead more than a thousand years after the raising of the saints. It will also be observed that, *there is, according to this theory, no resurrection of the Jews and Gentiles who are on earth during the millennium.* Perhaps it is because they never die, but live on for ever on the new earth. And this must be the case, unless they are changed while living and thus become possessed of spiritual bodies. But the theory says nothing of any living ones being changed, except the portion of the church which is alive at the coming of the Lord.

Let us now test by the word of God the doctrine of four resurrections separated by long intervals of time.

1 Thess. iv.  
16.  
John v. 28.  
1 Cor. xv. 52

It is certain that at the second coming, "when the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout (summons) with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. The dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed."

Phil. iii. 21.

This the scripture teaches. But when our theorists assert that *only* those who formed the church between Pentecost and that day shall then arise and be changed, they add to the word of God. No such restriction is found in these passages or elsewhere. It is made solely for the sake of the theory, which wit- ut it must perish. All God's people shall hear the joyful summons and come forth to have part in "the better resurrection;" and there is not a hint of any *difference in time* between the resurrection of Old and New Testament saints.

John v. 28.  
Heb. xi. 35.

The resurrection of the faithful remnant at some later time is alike without foundation. It is simply an *inference from the vision* of John who saw “the “SOULS” (not Rev. xx. 4 bodies) of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, etc., and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” The inference is to this effect: if John saw *souls* living and reigning, their *bodies* must have been raised before Christ came with His saints: and as these were beheaded because they would not worship the beast, they must have died after the church was caught up, and Antichrist as the beast was developed, and thus could not have risen when the church rose: *therefore* there must have been a resurrection of the bodies of the faithful remnant sometime between the ascent of the church and the millennial reign. *This inference is the sole ground for asserting the resurrection of a faithful remnant.* But, how seeing a *vision* can prove that the vision will become a literal fact; or how *souls* can mean *bodies*; or living and reigning is equivalent to rising from the dead, does not appear. All these adverse considerations however have no weight with the Brethren, the theory needs the inference, that is enough; *THEREFORE it must be so.*

Again, we are told, that these three resurrections constitute the *First Resurrection*, which is spread over a Rev xx. 5, 6 period of at least seven years; and that the three classes of saints thus raised, live and reign with Christ for a thousand years. When the thousand years are finished, the rest of the dead—that is, the wicked dead—rise. And this is the *Second Resurrection*. Let us now Rev xx. 5. examine this passage with care. It is confessedly a

difficult passage. We dare not say that we are sure of its full or exact meaning; at the same time we can show that the above interpretation is not tenable, and is contrary to other passages concerning which there can be no doubt. And here we must call attention to a canon of interpretation which commends itself to common sense, and yet is continually violated by the Plymouth doctrine. The canon is, that *the darker and more difficult passages are to be explained by the more plain and easy; and not the more simple and easy by the difficult and dark.*

Rev. xix.

In the preceding chapter the Lord is represented as coming at the head of His saints, a conqueror with His army. The chapter closes with the slaying of His enemies. Our friends say that this is a literal slaying of men in the flesh—of the living nations—“in the day of the Lord,” and that literal vultures gorge themselves on the carcasses of the slain. Next in chapter twentieth, Satan is seen to be bound and cast into the abyss, shut up, with a seal put on him till the thousand years should be fulfilled. Our friends, not observing that this is merely a vision and not a prediction, insist that the passage teaches that Satan will literally be confined with material chains, in a material pit, and under a material seal for a literal thousand years. *The theory must hold the literal view; for to admit a figurative or spiritual binding, and a figurative or spiritual millennium, would be suicidal, as the whole is said to occur among living nations.* Next then, we have literal thrones set in the literal heavens, where dwellers on the earth can see them. The saints who fought under the Lord and

Matt. xxv.  
31.

Rev. xx. 12.

overthrew the living enemies now sit down upon these chairs of state, and begin the *sessional judgment* over the living nations. These reigning saints are said to have enjoyed the *First Resurrection*; some of them, at least seven years before. But now it is said "This is the First Resurrection, blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be *priests* of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

Rev. xx. 5, 6

We ask, what is the First Resurrection? Is it being raised by the Archangel's trump seven years before when the bride went to heaven? Or is it reigning for a thousand years? If the former, it cannot be the latter; and cannot refer to Old Testament saints or the faithful remnant. If the latter, there is no proof of a *bodily* resurrection at all. Either alternative upsets the theory.

1 Thess. iv. 17.  
Rev. xx. 4.

Again we ask, why should the resurrection of the wicked be called the *Second* resurrection? The expression is not found in the bible. There is not a single text of scripture that teaches two resurrections separated in time, or speaks of a second resurrection. The doctrine is a pure fiction. There is a second *death*, but no second resurrection; the idea is unknown to God's word.

We may now make a remark or two expository of this dark passage. A candid and unprejudiced reader will be satisfied that we have first a *vision* of conquest, ending in the victory of King Jesus over all his enemies. Then, we have a *vision* of Satan being put under re-

Rev. xix. 11-21.

Rev. xx. 1.

Dan. vii. 27. straint. Thirdly, we have a *vision* of the saints regnant, followed by explanatory remarks. Lastly, we have a  
 Rev. xx. 11. *vision* of a throne of judgment and of the resurrection of the dead. Thus we have *four visions*, which *were seen* in the above order. But to assert that the things seen are to be realized in literal fact; that the coming events of which they are revelations to a seer, are consecutively to follow each other in the same order—to assert that here we have history written before hand in chronological order—is a pure assumption. Yet unless this is assumed, the theory has no base on which to rest.

Again, a literal fulfilment of these visions in history is absurd nonsense. Attempt to carry it out, and it will at once appear. The man Jesus literally, with a sharp sword coming out of his mouth, with which he  
 Rev. xix. 13, 15. 21. should smite the nations! literally wearing a vesture  
 Rev. xix. 13, 14. dipped in blood! Spiritual bodies of risen saints riding on white horses, a brigade of cavalry! An angel literally crying to the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven!  
 Rev. xix. 17, 21. Literal vultures feeding on the flesh of slain men! A  
 Rev. xx. i. literal key for the abyss, and a literal chain wherewith  
 Rev. xx. 12. to bind a spirit! Literal books opened for judgment! These are a few things which must convince the reader that he is dealing with figurative and symbolic language. If any one will insist on them being taken literally, we will give such an one up as hopelessly blinded. He who expects the Lord, when he comes *with* his saints to judge living nations in wrath, to have a sharp sword in his mouth, and to lead to the charge risen saints in white linen, is not amenable to reason; we must let him alone

in his delusion. Even the brethren, however, admit that in *some things* the passage is not to be taken literally and treated as plain history in prose. Still they insist on a literal thousand years; for if it is not found in *this vision*, it is not spoken of elsewhere. They also insist on a literal First resurrection; for if it is not to be found here, it is to be found no where else. To allow that these prophetic visions are to be interpreted as other prophecies are, would be fatal to the theory; *for apart from this dark vision so full of manifestly symbolic features, there is not a text in the whole Bible that appears to speak of saints rising before the "rest of the dead."* Therefore a VISION OF SOULS REIGNING must be held to mean a RESURRECTION OF BODIES; and the SOULS of them that were beheaded, etc., must be held to mean the BODIES of the Church of Old Testament Saints, and of the Faithful Remnant. No wonder that our friends hold to this dark passage with a death grip; it is the keystone of the theory; take it away and behold a ruin.

To show yet further how utterly indefensible the interpretation is, we have but to compare the passage where John "saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held, who cried with a loud voice." Rev. vi. 9. On the principles of the theory this would teach that these martyrs were raised then; but the passage in which it is to be found belongs to the Tribulation era according to the theory, hence it is given up there. But surely if a *vision of souls* there does not imply resurrection, a vision of souls elsewhere does not necessarily imply it. Whether then any other consistent interpretation can be found

or not, this of the Brethren at least must be rejected as absurd.

2. Other passages are adduced to help out the theory; and since it is impossible to find the doctrine in any *one* passage, it is hoped by putting into juxtaposition passages which are widely separated in the word of God—by connecting in one sentence two or three texts which, as God has given them treat of entirely different subjects—the doctrine may have a semblance of scripture evidence. Thus, “when the Saints are caught up; the dead in Christ shall rise first, but the rest of the dead live not till the thousand years are finished: the Saints live and reign—they that are Christ’s at his coming; at that time, Thy (Daniel’s) people shall be delivered, (*i.e.*, the Jews shall be restored to the Millennial kingdom), and then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father. This is the First Resurrection. When the thousand years are expired Satan shall be loosed, Gog and Magog shall be destroyed, then the great white throne shall be seen; and the rest of the dead, *i.e.*, the wicked dead, shall rise. This is the Second Resurrection.”

The doctrine looks plausible, as here stated; and if scripture had predicted these things thus chronologically arranged, and used the expression “Second Resurrection,” there would be proof in point. But the theory is found wanting, and stamped as human, when the *arrangement* is seen to be a device of man’s. The apostle does not say in Thessalonians that the dead in Christ shall rise first, as compared with the rest of the dead, but first, as before the changing of the living. There is

Thess. iv.  
17.  
ev. xx. 5.  
Cor. xv. 23  
an. xii. 2,3

Matt. xiii. 43  
ev. xx. 5.  
ev. xx. 7.

Ev. xx. 13.

Thess. iv  
16.

not in the passage the slightest reference to the wicked dead; and to impertinently thrust a *vision* from Revelation, that belongs to an entirely different class of subjects, into the epistle to the Thessalonians, which is *dogmatic*, is a criminal abuse of God's Word. But if the resurrection of the wicked is not referred to in that pas- 1 Thess. i.  
sage, or in the epistle to the Corinthians, still less is 16.  
there in them a shadow of ground for interpolating a 1 Cor. xv.3  
thousand years between two resurrections. Nor does Daniel say a word about a thousand years intervening; he says, "The multitude of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, *some* to everlasting life, and *some* to shame and everlasting contempt. *Then* they that be wise shall shine," etc. As though the shining Dan. xii.2  
forth of the wise was to follow the resurrection of both classes referred to in the previous verse; not to follow one and precede the other as the Brethren teach. Every passage is against the theory; and no combination of nothings can make something. By no legerdemain can six passages, each of which says nothing of two resurrections separated in time, be so arranged as to prove what is not found in any one. The attempt is a trick which deceives many, and imposes upon the man himself who practises it; and though Brethren may have succeeded in convincing themselves that the fiction is revealed in scripture, candid enquirers will reject it as an unwarranted fancy based on an abuse of scripture.

3. We are prepared however to go yet further by way of disproof. The apostle Paul tells us that he, in common with all Jews "had hope towards God that there should be a resurrection of the dead, both of the Acts. xxi.  
15.

just and of the unjust;" not two distinct resurrections, but one of both classes at the same time. Martha also

hn xi. 24. "knew that her brother would rise again in the resurrection at the last day." This must have been the resurrection of the just—of Old Testament Saints—and she knew that it would be at the *last day*, not a thousand years before it. Our Lord Himself taught that "the

hn v. 28. *hour* is coming in the which *ALL that are in the graves*," (including Old Testament saints) "shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto a resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto a resurrection of judgment,"

hn vi. 49. and that those who believe on Him He "will raise up *at the last day*." Surely these texts imply, only one resurrection; that believers shall rise at the last day, and not a thousand years before the world ends; and that both good and bad—*all* in the grave—shall obey the summons of the Son of Man at the same time. Reverence for the Saviour and the respect due to Him as a teacher, ought to restrain the flights of carnal fancy, and prevent men from teaching that our Lord meant to be understood in such passages as teaching that when His voice shall be heard and shall wake the dead, only saints converted between Pentecost and the coming shall obey the call; that Old Testament saints shall slumber on for a while, but come forth at a later period; and that after more than a thousand years have passed, without another call or trumpet blast, the wicked dead shall tardily come forth for judgment. The idea is preposterous that a summons uttered by the Son of Man centuries before they had a being, should raise the wicked who lived and

died during the Millennial era; and it is charging the blessed Master with folly to say that by an *hour* He meant a period of more than a thousand years' duration; or that by *all* that are in their graves coming forth at His call He meant two resurrections separated by a millennium. Verily though one rose from the dead, men who deal with God's truth thus deceitfully in order to bolster up a theory, would not be convinced. Verily such men err, not knowing the scripture. When they assert that "the dead, small and great, who stand before God" for judgment are only the wicked dead, they add to God's word: when they assert that only *bad* deeds come into judgment they take from God's Word: when they assert, that when the book of life is opened there shall not be found therein the name of one person then standing before God, they charge the Judge with folly or hypocrisy in opening that book; when they assert that all the righteous were raised a thousand years before this solemn judgment scene, their assertion is without a single text to sustain it; and when they presumptuously affirm that the millions of the human race which were born during the millennium and formed the kingdom, shall never die, but at the time of the judgment of the wicked dead shall be changed, they contradict the teaching of Scripture "that it is appointed unto men, once to die and *after that* the judgment," and proclaim a human dogma for which they have not a shadow of Scripture proof. And yet it is clear that without these baseless assumptions and daring perversions of God's truth the theory cannot stand; for on them it rests.

Rev. xx.

Heb. x.

The expression "First Resurrection," is confessedly a difficult one. In order to afford more light on it, we may here slightly digress from our plan, and very shortly give a statement which we think furnishes a satisfactory exegesis of the passage where it occurs. The careful reader will notice that while in Scripture a second Resurrection is never mentioned a second Death is. Also that the second death follows the last judgment.

We know the fundamental doctrine of Revelation "that death hath passed on all men, for all have sinned ; in Adam all die : and we are dead in trespasses and sins ; for death is the wages of sin." This then is the *first death*, that came upon all men in the day that Adam sinned. Then we have a resurrection from *this* death ; you "hath He made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins ;" we rise with Christ to a new life. Now beyond question, blessed is he that hath part in *this* resurrection : for he hath eternal life ; and shall never die nor come into condemnation ; shall be raised again at the last day ; and shall be owned and rewarded by Christ at his coming. *If this is the resurrection from the first death, is it not the First Resurrection ?* Then there is a *second Death*. The first death was eternal separation from God ; only its extremity was delayed by the interposition of Redemptive grace in the patient long-suffering of God. But when the judge shall come and pass doom on the wicked rejectors of grace and the workers of iniquity, the *second death* will occur. Such sinners die the second death, when mercy is clean gone, and delayed vengeance is executed, in eternal exclusion from the comfortable presence of God, where shall be

weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. From this second death there is no Second resurrection; whereas on those who by the grace of God have part in the First resurrection this second Death hath no power. Thus scripture teaches two deaths, and a first resurrection which saves from the second death, in perfect harmony with the doctrine of a general resurrection from the dead, and a general judgment at the last day.

We may now leave the resurrections of the theory, four in number, and occurring at different times during more than a thousand years. We have found the doctrine to be both without Scripture foundation, and contrary to Scripture. And we have seen that the difficult and dark passage on which solely the theory rests, is not susceptible of the interpretations put upon it by the Brethren, and may be satisfactorily interpreted in another way, and in harmony with the rest of Scripture. We now make a few remarks upon the last point.

## VI. THE MILLENNIUM.

There is no need of saying much on this doctrine as it stands or falls with the others which have been disposed of.

The Church holds that there is a glorious future before our world, when righteousness shall be in the ascendant, that a time will come when the saints shall possess the kingdom, and shall live and reign with Christ, while God's enemies shall feign submission and own the lordship of Jesus. Both Old and New Testaments speak of the glory of this happy era. In the Apocalypse we find a *thousand years* specified as the period

Zech. xi.  
Isa. lxii.  
Dan. vii.  
Rev. xx.  
Psa. lxxi.  
Phil. ii.

during which this blessed state of things shall continue. Hence the Millennium, *i.e.*, the thousand years, has come to be spoken of as the hope of the Church. So far as this goes we have no quarrel with our brethren.

But as to the *nature* of this Millennium, and the means by which it is to be introduced there is some divergence of opinion. We have seen that the Brethren teach that the Millennium is the *personal reign* of Christ with his risen saints on *the earth and over living nations, Jews and Gentiles*; that during the millennium there is to be a natural state of things, in no way differing from the experience of men now living, only the saints will be enthroned above the earth while they rule; also that this kingdom is to be introduced by judgments which desolate the earth, and by the bodily presence of Jesus and his risen saints; that the Holy Ghost shall be withdrawn from the earth at least seven years before the millennium begins, and that the dispensation of grace will be ended when He is withdrawn. Thus the dispensation of grace ends before the kingdom of God begins.

All this requires and is consistent with two comings, *one* for the saints and a *second* at least seven years after with the saints; with the idea of two resurrections or more, one at the coming of the saints, and the other a thousand years after; with the idea of three or more judgments, one in heaven, a second on earth lasting for a thousand years, and a third at some still more remote period, of the wicked dead; with the idea of conversion and holiness without the presence of the Holy Ghost, or the agency of the church. In a word,

the millennium of the theory is a fair specimen of the whole, and is with much ingenuity made to fit in with the rest. But if there is only *one* coming—the coming spoken of in Scripture, and that coming is identical with the day of the Lord; if there is only one Resurrection from the dead spoken of—a general resurrection; only one judgment,—a general judgment; only one way of salvation, viz., by union to Christ through the operation of the Holy Ghost; and we have shown above that such is the rendering of Scripture: it necessarily follows that the millennium of the theory is without foundation in Scripture,—nay, opposed to its teaching.

We may add two considerations which tend further to disprove the theory. The thousand years of *the binding* of Satan cannot be understood literally as to the binding; the vision is beyond question to be interpreted symbolically. Why then not interpret *the time* also symbolically? A thousand is used as a general number and denotes a long time; but who would dream of interpreting literally Peter's statement, "one day is with 2 Pet. iii. the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as one day?" And yet this the theory insists upon, Ps. xc. 4. while with glaring inconsistency it makes Daniel's week mean seven years, and otherwise arbitrarily disposes of times and numbers. Surely it is more consistent to understand the binding of Satan as symbolic of the prevalence of righteousness on the earth during a period, indefinitely long, before the last grand apostasy, and the destruction of all wickedness at the appearing of the Son of man as judge.

2. Jesus has ascended on high, and "the heavens

Acts iii. 31. must receive Him until the times of the restitution of  
 Rev. xxi. 5. all things; then He shall come and make all things  
 new, in the new heavens and the new earth in which  
 Pet. iij. 13. dwelleth righteousness." *During his absence* He has  
 John xiv. 16. sent the Holy Ghost; and *by the spirit* He is present in  
 1st. xxviii. 20. and with His Church until the end of the age. But at  
 the end of the age "the Son of man shall send forth  
 1st. xiii. 41. His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom  
 all things that offend, and them which do iniquity,  
 and shall cast them into a furnace of fire." From  
 these passages it is evident that the Holy Ghost will re-  
 main with the church, and on this earth, until the Son  
 of Man comes; that when he comes the judgment of  
 the wicked will take place; and that the kingdom will be  
 in existence *before* His coming, and so cannot be intro-  
 duced *by* it.

Yet further it has been shown that the kingdom is  
 now in existence; that Jesus is reigning by His Spirit,  
 that His kingdom is not of the world; and that it shall  
 continue for ever. Now all this is incompatible with a  
 kingdom of this world, to succeed that which now  
 exists, and to be established without the Holy Ghost.

Thus then we leave the millennial dream of an earth-  
 ly kingdom of Jesus over men in the flesh. It has no  
 scripture to support it, and is opposed alike to the letter  
 of God's word, and to the spiritual nature of Messiah's  
 mission and work. A millennium of glory and blessed-  
 ness our world will see; but it will not be one of mere  
 earthly glory or carnal enjoyment. It will be the happy  
 result of the Holy Spirit's mighty working through the  
 Gospel of God's grace among the nations.

And now our self imposed task is so far accomplished. We have examined the definitions of Pre-millennial doctrine as to the Church, the Kingdom, the Coming, the Judgment, the Resurrection and the Millennium. We have weighed them; we have found them wanting; and we reject the whole ingenious and fanciful theory that has been constructed upon them, declaring it contrary to scripture properly interpreted. We have still to shew the dangerous and hurtful tendencies of the doctrine—a doctrine, which many regard with favour, while others deem it harmless. Before doing so, however, it may be well to give succinctly a positive statement of the doctrine held by the church as over against the errors which we have been examining.

#### VII. POSITIVE STATEMENT.

That in speaking of events still future but predicted, there is room for difference of *opinion* is at once conceded. We lay no claim to a perfect knowledge of unfulfilled prophecy, or to the possession of a key which will unlock every mystery; *we* are not infallible, nor are we so guided by the Holy Spirit as to be incapable of error. There are things which we have to learn, nor do we refuse to be taught. Still we are satisfied with the Eschatology commonly taught in the Reformed churches, and believe that in its leading features it accords with scripture. The doctrine of scripture is a unity—truth is but one—and therefore we feel bound to reject whatever contradicts well established truths. Holding ourselves perfectly free to receive light on any question which is still only in part revealed and to prove

all things, we nevertheless see good reason to hold fast by the faith delivered to the Saints in past ages, and as handed down by our fathers in the Westminster standards.

God is "the king eternal, immortal and invisible;" to Him of right belongs the dominion, and to Him men owe a dutiful subjection. When man sinned, he rebelled against God, and Satan usurped the kingdom. Since that time Satan has been the "god of this world," and the Prince of the power of the air. *Redemption* is the deliverance of man and the world from the thralldom of Satan, and the effects of the fall by the power of God; and it involves the destruction of the works of the devil. This Redemption God accomplishes in Jesus Christ, and by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

The first promise of the redemption was that "the Seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent." Under the patriarchal dispensation there were worshippers of the true God, who were known as the "Sons of God." But God made a covenant with Abraham, saying that "in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed." When the descendants of Abraham became a nation, He made a national covenant with them, and gave them a law by which they were separated from the rest of mankind, a holy people, "a kingdom of priests," and the repository of blessing for the nations. This covenant and law were temporary—imposed until the seed should come—and were to be superseded by a better covenant, and the Gospel dispensation of grace and truth. At length in the fulness of time God's Son became incar-

1 Tim. i. 17;  
vi. 15.  
Dan. iv. 3.  
Isa. xxxii. 22  
Rom. viii. 7.  
2 Cor. iv. 4.  
Luke iv. 6.  
John xii. 31  
Eph. ii. 2.

Col. i. 13.  
John i. 29.  
Heb. ii. 14.  
1 John iii. 8  
Rom. viii. 3,  
10, 22, 23.

Gen. iii. 15.

Gen. iv. 26;  
vi. 2; v. 21.

Gen. xii. 3.  
Heb. viii. 9;  
Amos iii. 2.

Ex. xix. 6.  
Gal. iii. 19.

Heb. viii. 7,  
8, 10, 13.  
John i. 17.  
Gal. iv. 4.

nate as the Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant. By His sufferings and death He "bruised the head of the serpent, made an end of sins, brought in eternal life." He rose from the dead and ascended on high, invested with "all power." There He must reign "until all His enemies are put under His feet." Luke xxiv. 26.  
Dan. ix. 24.  
Mat. xxviii. 18.  
1 Cor. xv. 25.

To accomplish this, he has sent the Holy Spirit, as "power from on high" to his church, commissioning it "to preach the gospel among all nations, discipling them and making them obedient to the faith." Since that hour when power was given, the kingdom of God has been coming with an advancing power, and the kingdom of Satan has been waning. There is a ceaseless conflict going on in this world between Christ with His sacramental host, and Satan with the powers of darkness. The world power so far has been wielded by Satan, to the persecution of Christ's church, and the retardation of the victory of grace. The two kingdoms stand side by side, and the battle rages, wherever the Holy Spirit in the church assails Satan's kingdom with the sword of the word. So it will continue until the nations become subject to King Jesus, and "every knee bow to Him, and every tongue confess that he is Lord." Then a blessed reign of righteousness will obtain throughout all the world, when the saints of the most high shall have the dominion. Thereafter a fresh outbreak of malignant wickedness will take place, and sin will culminate in the last desperate effort of Satan to regain his usurped dominion. It will be in vain, for King Jesus will come in person with saints and angels to execute judgment on His enemies, and finally deliver Acts i. 8.  
Mat. xxviii. 19.  
Rom. i. 5.  
John xviii. 22.  
Acts xxviii. 31.  
Luke x. 18.  
Rev. xii. 9, 10.  
Eph. vi. 12.  
Rev. xiii. 4.  
Rev. xi. 15.  
Phil. ii. 10.  
Isa. ii. 3, 4.  
Rev. xx. 7, 9, 10.  
Jude xiv.  
Matt. xxv.  
1 Cor. xv. 26, 52, 57.

his redeemed. Then the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed; the dead shall be raised; the living shall be changed; the Sons of God shall be manifested; the creature shall be redeemed from corruption; and the judgment of all men shall proceed. Amid great physical changes a new heaven and a new earth shall appear. The present *age* shall end, and eternity begin. All things shall be restored. The *Kingdom* shall be re-established, and shall be given up unto the Father, and God shall be all in all. Thus the kingdom which had been disturbed by sin, shall be restored by Jesus Christ, through the operation of the Holy Ghost.

During all this period of conflict, in every dispensation, God has a covenant people for whom Jesus died, saved by faith, and partakers of the holy Ghost. This is the *Church*. This church is the instrumentality which God uses for teaching, enlightening, and regenerating the world. It is his organized kingdom on earth, and lives through the ages. Individual believers in successive ages die, and go to be with Christ; there they await the consummation, the day of the redemption of the body, when Jesus returns to earth, and with the archangel's trumpet-blast wakes the dead. Then all who sleep in Jesus God brings with Him, the dead are raised, the living are changed, and the completed Bride—the whole number of God's elect—are openly acknowledged and acquitted, and go into life eternal. As for God's unrepentant enemies, they are judged, condemned and destroyed from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, which is the second death.

The above statement contains nothing beyond the

doctrines which are generally received by Christians. This view of Scripture is characterized by a unity and simplicity of plan which links together the different dispensations in their several stages of development, and which at once commends it to the judgment of the bible student. There is no forcing of scripture required to sustain it, although it is necessary to interpret scripture not with a carnal sensuous literalness, but spiritually, and in many cases figuratively, as was evidently intended. And while every candid man will admit that in some passages "are things hard to be understood," in dealing with such dark and difficult passages, it is certainly more reverent and safe to interpret them consistently with the clear and unmistakable teachings of the word, or to let them alone, than to give them a fanciful, half literal, half figurative, meaning; and on that meaning to construct a theory which is clearly repugnant to the letter of many passages, and to the the tenor of scripture as a whole.

#### VIII. THE TENDENCIES OF PRE-MILLEN- ARIANISM.

No error is harmless. The tendency of all departure from truth is to depart more widely. Errors in doctrine lead to errors in practice; and all experience shows that as corruption of the moral nature leads to the rejection of truths which condemn vice, so perversion of the intellect leads to looseness of morals, and impurity of life. We have no hesitation in asserting that Antimonianism—that is disregard for law—in doctrine, leads naturally to licentiousness, and to utter disregard

of the law of God and man in practice. We also regret deeply to have to say that the tendency to Antimonianism is clearly traceable in the new views on which we have been animadverting, and we fear that the morality of many has not been improved by their adopting these views. Nevertheless we are far from believing, and we do not wish to be understood as asserting that in every case those who hold these views have gone all the length in doctrinal error to which the views naturally and logically lead ; or that our pre-millenarian brethren have all acted the unchristian and uncharitable part, or approve of that licence, which are the legitimate outcome of the theory. Far from this, we are satisfied that many have thoughtlessly been led by the apparent earnestness, guileless simplicity, and warmth of the teachers, to say that these men are more Christ-like than ordinary Christians, and therefore their doctrine is more likely to be Christ's doctrine ; and so they have embraced it. Others can scarcely be said to know these new views, or to have begun to study the questions involved, and have made no great progress in the new departure. While others still, being under the influence of vital godliness, are by virtue of their constant communion with God, meanwhile kept through spiritual instinct from the natural evil consequences of their erroneous views.

We gladly admit that some who favor the pre-millenarian theory are excellent men, and learned commentators ; and we rejoice to state that for the most part these stop short of the absurdities and uncharitableness of Plymouthism, and are free from the practices of

Antimonianism. We also gladly acknowledge to the glory of God, that men holding these views more or less pronouncedly, have been owned of God in their efforts to save souls. But we emphatically contend that the high Christian character and success of such men is not to be attributed to these views. These characters, formed oft-times after the old type, are what they are by the grace of God apart from their mistaken hope; and their gospel is the power of God unto salvation, not on account of the so called "Bridegroom cry," but on account of a dying and risen Jesus fully offered to sinners. Any pre-eminent excellence which they possess, they share with other children of God; and that not on account of, but in spite of their peculiar views. Indeed it will be found that the influences of the churches, which they now decry and strive to destroy, and the gospel they learned there, have made them what they are by the grace of God. With these remarks, to avoid misconception and needless offence, we proceed to show that the tendency of the views in question is dangerous to the individual, and highly injurious to true godliness, and to the church of Christ.

1. *The method of interpretation by which the theory is advocated tends to produce unbelief.* We shall not dwell at length on the arbitrary collocation of passages culled from various parts of the Bible, and skilfully arranged so as to teach doctrines nowhere found in scripture as God gave it. We have already called attention to this; and we now only add, that there is not a doctrine, no matter how erroneous or absurd, that may not in that way be advocated. When thus treated, the

Bible becomes a book without meaning—an instrument which gives no certain sound, but will utter any tune that the player pleases—and consequently it ceases to be an infallible standard of truth. This method of treatment has led many to say, ‘you may teach anything from the Bible; so, in order to certainty, we must have an *inspired* interpreter, one in whom the Holy Ghost dwells.’ As the church of Rome claims to be infallible, and the repository of the Holy Ghost, many that they may end their doubts, have gone over to Rome, surrendered their private judgment, and professedly believe what the church teaches, accepting her interpretation of the word of God as authoritative. In like manner, those who have observed most carefully the new teachers, will have noticed that they also claim for those whom *they judge* to be “the Church” of Christ, the sole possession of the Holy Ghost and spiritual discernment; while they deny to other Christians who differ from them, these privileges. Rome and Plymouthism in this agree: both alike deny that the Scripture is to be understood in the sense which it seems to plain men to bear; and hold that certain men are infallibly taught by the Holy Ghost, viz., the Pope and the Saints, whose teaching is implicitly to be received.

*The method of interpretation which we oppose also tends to carnal and sensuous views of divine things, and is essentially unspiritual.* According to the theory, the recipient of covenant privilege to whom the promises are made, is the descendant of Abraham according to the flesh, the seed by nature; not Abraham’s seed by faith: the king to come, is an earthly king, a carnal Messiah:

the kingdom is an earthly kingdom, to be inherited by living men, "by flesh and blood;" the bliss in reversion for the faithful is worldly bliss, not heavenly. Much more is taught of the same carnal sensuous character.

We hesitate to ask what is meant by a marriage of Christ with his church in heaven. The idea of any other than a *spiritual* marriage is so gross, and utterly repugnant to christian sentiment, that we cannot even suppose our brethren to hold that a *literal* marriage is meant among those "children of the resurrection who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the *resurrection* of the dead, and who shall neither marry nor be given in marriage." And yet, according to the carnal literal method of interpretation, we know not what else to make of a marriage which is not spiritual, and is something beyond and in addition to the union which already exists between Christ and His people, and is then to be perfected. This carnal sensuous method of interpretation, led to Jewish unbelief, and still keeps that people blinded. *They* insist, as the Brethren do, on Israel according to the flesh inheriting the earthly Canaan; on an earthly king, a son of David in the flesh, to save them by carnal weapons. Their interpretation of scripture is the Pre-millenarian interpretation; and because Jesus came—a king indeed,—but not with carnal glory and worldly insignia, they rejected him and reject him still. To tell us that the King will hereafter thus come in carnal glory and worldly pomp, and establish an earthly kingdom, is to preach the very doctrine which blinded Jewish eyes; and led them in unbelief to crucify their Messiah. On these principles

xvi

xiv  
xx

Luke xx.

the Messiah has not come, Jesus is not king, and scripture has not been fulfilled. Nay further, on these principles the unbelieving remnant of the Jews are right; *they* will inherit the promise to Abraham, who continue to reject Jesus Christ until he comes to judge the gentiles.

Christianity has as its peculiar distinguishing feature, *Spirituality*. Its glory is to "worship in spirit and in truth." A crucified, risen, and ascended Jesus, whom having not seen we love, is the only way to God, and "He is able to save to the uttermost, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for us." The session of Jesus at the right hand of God, and his appearing there for us is a principal part of his priestly office. But the theory brings Christ down from heaven and ends his high-priestly work; insists on a personal presence of Jesus which is not spiritual: on a marriage of saints with risen bodies which is not spiritual: on an earthly dominion which is not spiritual: on carnal and temporal rewards during a future state of existence on earth; not heavenly rewards, for spiritual beings, in a new state of existence. Indeed, it is just here that the peculiar charm of Pre-millennialism is to be found. Men feel the power of fleshly, worldly motives, and sensuous descriptions, but have difficulty in grasping spiritual realities which are shadowed forth under the figurative descriptions, used in Scripture to give us some idea of what passes all experience and thought of man. Under this carnal and sensuous influence they adopt "the hope of the coming," and the bodily presence of Jesus, saying, that this will be far better than the present

*orphan* state in his absence. Nevertheless this is opposed to the spirituality of the Christian religion; and is directly contrary to Jesus' statement that it is better John xvi for us that he should go away in body, so that he might be present in spirit; and, that having the spirit we should not be *orphans*, but have Himself with us in a John xiv higher and fuller manner than when he was present Matt. xxv in the flesh. 19.

2. *The theory tends to the subversion of some doctrines of the Gospel.* We shall notice two points, both of which have been touched upon in our discussion.

The theory teaches that men were saved before the Holy Ghost was given, and that others will be saved after the Holy Ghost has been withdrawn from earth. *The Church* and Holy Ghost ascend we are told into heaven with Jesus. But others are saved after that event. Conversions of a certain kind go on on earth, when there is no church there to preach, and no Holy Ghost to quicken. Christ died for the *Church*, and those who constitute it were saved by his blood, and purchased. Others were saved too; but they were not in the same sense purchased with that blood, and are not of the number chosen in Christ Jesus from before the foundation of the world.

The tendency of all such distinctions manifestly is to produce a belief in two or more ways of attaining bliss hereafter; and to overthrow the fundamental truths, "no man cometh to the father but by Christ," and "except a man be born of water and *the spirit* he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Then the doctrine that hereafter there are only two

states, viz., an everlasting heaven and hell—a state of bliss, and a state of woe,—is subverted by the theory. According to it, there are three eternal states: there is a heaven for the Church; an earthly bliss for the Jews and Gentiles of the millennial age; and a lake of fire for the wicked, who are finally condemned and die the second death. We are told, that the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels, and everlasting punishment, are for living nations, and the eternal life for living nations; not for men after the resurrection. Who then can tell whether these awful words are to be understood as teaching a proper eternity? In this connection it is worthy of note that the tendency to regard with favour the annihilationist and restorationist theories is strong among those who have adopted Pre-millenarian views, and that dissatisfaction with the eschatology of the Reformed confessions is often associated with Pre-millenarian leanings. Naturally so, for the doctrine of salvation, after the Holy Ghost has been withdrawn, in some other way than that by which the Church is saved, viz., through the gospel of God's grace, and the gracious work of the Holy Ghost, fosters *naturally*, if it does not suggest, the hope that some other way will be found for restoring the finally impenitent, when the gospel of the grace of God is no longer proclaimed, and the eternal age has begun.

3. A third feature of these views fraught with danger is, that *they tend to make void the law of God, and to issue in Antinomian licence*. A distinction is drawn by our friends between the *gospel of the grace of God*; as preached between the day of Pentecost and Christ's

coming, and the *gospel of the Kingdom* which was preached by John Baptist and others before Pentecost, and will be preached again after the church and Holy Ghost have gone into heaven. We shall not pause to show that the distinction is worthless, but simply state in passing, that in the only passage where the former phrase occurs, the apostle says that the "ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus" was to testify the gospel of the grace of God," and in the very next verse he says, that he, *after Pentecost* had preached the kingdom at Ephesus to Gentiles. In the last addresses recorded of him in the Acts, he is also said to have preached the kingdom of God at Rome. Now Paul always preached the same thing, viz., the gospel of Christ. Hence we rightly infer that preaching the kingdom, and preaching the gospel, were the same thing; and that there are not two gospels, one of God's grace, and the other of God's kingdom, but one, viz., the gospel of Christ. What we have to do with now is the tendency of this distinction, and it will at once appear to any thoughtful mind that the tendency is towards dangerous error.

Acts. xx  
24, 25.

Acts xxvi  
Rom. i.

The gospel of the grace of God is represented as being "Believe and you are saved," the gospel of the kingdom is "Repent, and you will be blessed in an "earthly kingdom."

He who obeys the gospel of God's grace, we are told, believes that Jesus died for his sins: is forgiven, receives the Holy Ghost, is saved, and knows he will never be judged; is one of the church, will ascend with Jesus when he comes for the saints, will be married to

him in the heavenlies, and will reign with him over the earth. He that obeys the gospel of the kingdom: repents, obeys the law of God, is benefited in a lower sense by Jesus, but does not receive the Holy Ghost, will be judged, does not belong to the church, shall not be married to Jesus, and will remain in the earthlies.

The gospel of grace is said to require faith, and to confer heavenly blessing; the gospel of the kingdom to require a turning to God, and a law-obedience, and to confer earthly blessing. The gospel of grace is being now preached, and those who obey, become saints; the gospel of the kingdom will be preached after Christ has come for his saints, will be accompanied by a restoration of the law of Moses, the Jewish covenant, and the temple with its sacrificial and ritual service, and those who obey that gospel and keep the law will inherit the earth. Surely this is *another* gospel than that which Paul preached. This is to proclaim another way to eternal happiness, and a lower salvation than that obtained through union to Christ by the Holy Ghost. This is to re-establish man's own righteousness and law-obedience, as the ground of acceptance. This is to abrogate, after Christ comes for his saints, justification by faith, and to proclaim justification by law fulfilling.

Nor is this by any means all. In thus presenting the gospel, in the present age men are told, you have *only to believe*. Repentance toward God is not insisted on along with faith in Jesus Christ; nor, according to the new doctrine, is it needed in order to salvation. *Only believe*. Men ought not to *pray* for forgiveness, but to believe that they are forgiven, because Christ bore the

punishment due to them; and as they were in Christ before the foundation of the world, so *all* their sins were laid on him, and were forgiven more than eighteen hundred years ago, even the sins which they may hereafter commit. Only let a man believe this and he is saved.

We have seen how, in order to carry out this idea of distinction between Jew and Christian, the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew's gospel must be torn asunder, part being applied to the Jewish remnant between the two comings, part to the Christian church, and part to the living Gentile nations. In like manner, the sermon on the mount, in the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of Matthew must be interpreted as not applicable to christians. The blessings therein contained are not for the Church, but for those who are of the "kingdom of heaven, and who inherit the earth." Matt. v. 3. 5  
 The Church is not the salt of the earth or the light of Matt. v. 20  
 the world, but witnesses for God sojourning for a time. to end.  
 The morality inculcated by Jesus is not for Christians but for the Jewish remnant. The directions for prayer are not for saints, but for Jews. Saints should not pray Matt. vi. 9  
 "thy kingdom come," or "thy will be done on earth," but "come Lord Jesus, and destroy this wicked world." Saints should not pray "Forgive us our Matt. vii. 1, 12.  
 debts," for they are already all forgiven. The prohibition to judge is not applicable to saints, for they are to judge the world. The revealed law is no longer binding on them, for they have the law of love to guide them, are free from law as the law is not for the righteous; and it is no longer they that sin, when they break the

commandments, but sin that dwelleth in them ; they have been made free from the law of sin and death. Thus step follows step, God's law is not established by the new views, but made void. The Old Testament scriptures with the decalogue, are given up as a rule of life, the gospels also. They were for Jews, not for the Church. Only part of the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles are acknowledged to be binding on the church. The saints are free, as the children of God, alike from law and commandment, their sole duty is to walk in love, themselves being judges as to what love requires.

Scripture warns us against teachers who promise  
Peter ii. 19  
John i. 8.  
ude 4. "liberty while they themselves are the servants of corruption ; who say they have no sin, and deceive themselves, not having the truth in them, ungodly men who turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness." And all experience, from the Apostles' days till now, shows the need of testing well the claim of exemption from law. Among German Antinomians, and Hyper-evangelists of our own day, the same tendency has been manifested. Men abuse the doctrine of sovereign grace and unconditional election ; and under the influence of a narrow, uncharitable presumptuous assurance, arrogate to themselves exclusively the blessings of salvation ; while too often in practice they manifest a singular disregard to the claims of truth, righteousness, purity of life, and Christian charity.

It may suffice thus to have shown the direct tendency of the views which we controvert, towards antinomianism in doctrine, and lasciviousness in practice. Few comparatively who hold these views may have fol-

lowed them out to their legitimate issues in practice; not however less evident is the tendency.

Other consequences might be noticed affecting the relation of children to the church, the salvation of infants, and their baptism, but we pass on to observe :

4. *The doctrine of the Church held by the Brethren, tends to produce spiritual pride, and strife among God's children, and to rend asunder and destroy the visible church.* We can appeal to the experience of every neighbourhood that has had its peace disturbed by the Brethren. All the churches now know to their cost how Brethrenism comes into a community. While men are sleeping and not dreaming of an enemy sowing tares, two self constituted evangelists make their appearance, no one knows whence, and begin to preach at the street corners, inviting their audience to some hall that they may hear the gospel of the grace of God (as if they had never heard it before), and circulating tracts, and leaflets with texts of scripture printed on them. A good impression is produced, christians of all the churches rejoice to hear the gospel thus proclaimed. They admire the men, who appear to be serious and earnest, and to know their bible so well. The most fastidious can find nothing amiss in the warm, and it may be powerful, presentation of saving gospel truth. Earnest christians take the evangelists by the hand, and into their houses, they bid them God-speed, and help to increase the interest awakened. At first our churches were open to these Evangelists, and ministers sat beside them, and countenanced the apparently good work, while serious christians aided in the enquiry

meetings. But what follows? After the ear of the community is fairly gained, and some converts have been made, a sentence or two is dropped, not in accord with ordinary evangelical doctrine, some *new* view, connected with the "Bridegroom cry." This is kindly called in question, straightway behold a change. Impatient of interference or remonstrance from men who, they do not hesitate to say, have not the spirit, and do not know the truth, but are hirelings leading the people down to hell, our evangelists begin a bitter controversy on points of doctrine, and church government, which ends in drawing away some good people from the church or churches which have favoured the movement, in stirring up dissension and strife among neighbours, and in families, if not in scattering altogether the once flourishing churches. And this deplorable result is gloried in. It is said to be the Lord's work; the opposition the preachers meet with is persecution for the Lord's sake; it is their glory. It is declared to be the duty of the saints to come out from the so-called churches, and *separate* themselves from the evil. A small assembly of saints is organized in the name of the Lord Jesus, without a man-made ministry, over which the Holy Ghost is to preside. The proselytes meet to break bread and carry on a warfare on the churches of christendom. Meanwhile they drink in the new milk and grow thereby, until they are satisfied that all the churches are in error. They adopt a *new creed*, so entirely different from the tradition of the churches, that they can no longer "fellowship" with them or join in their worship. Children cannot pray with their

fathers, nor wives with their husbands. So churches and families are rent in twain, and all we are told for the glory of God. Is this severe? It is simple history, true, undeniably, deplorably true.

Much as we lament that these things have been done and are still being done, we aver that on the principles of the theory it cannot be otherwise. Surely the tree that *must* bear such bitter fruit, judged by its fruit, cannot be planted by the God of peace. For let us look into the matter more narrowly. If the church be what the theory defines it to be, then without question there can be no *Visible church* on earth, and all organized churches are in error. If these saints alone have the Holy Ghost, then undoubtedly none but they can pray or praise in the Holy Ghost, and public worship or common prayer is an impossibility. If they alone are taught of God, then any christian who differs from them must be in error. If the Holy Ghost presides in their assembly, and all that is there done has His sanction and authority, then they are right in judging, and justified in refusing to hold fellowship with all who do not believe as they do. If the churches, though they may contain individual saints, are mere human institutions, and their ministry and ordinances have not the sanction of God's Spirit, then are they anti-christian, and saints should separate themselves. If the church is to be separate from the world, not in spirit only, but carnally and literally, then it is right for saints to have no family connection or social intercourse with any but saints. If the saints can try the spirits and *know* who are the children of God, then there is no excuse on these

principles for having an impure church, and it is right to cast out any brother who is judged to be not a saint.

Self-righteous pride cannot fail to spring up on these principles; censorious judging becomes a duty, and separation from the churches inevitable, although the churches may be willing to bear with the saint, and allow him all liberty of action. The theory necessitates separation from all organizations known as churches. For eighteen hundred years we must believe the church has been in error. Now at the Bride-groom cry, *THE Church* has started into existence, and is looking for her Lord, and all who hold that hope must condemn the church of martyrs, confessors, and reformers, declare that noble company deceived, and leave as anti-christian those organizations which have for centuries shed light on earth's darkness, saved souls, resisted wickedness, spread abroad the gospel; yea, even have given birth, through their ministers, to that new sect which now arrogates to itself the claim to be the Brethren, the Saints, the Bride of the Lamb, at the same time that unnaturally it disowns its parentage.

5. *The doctrine of the theory, as it is fatal to a visible church organization, renders impossible combined effort by christians, and if acted upon would quickly make an end of all missionary enterprises.* That individuals holding the theory are full of zeal we admit. But that zeal is expended almost exclusively among professed christians in endeavouring to propagate the new views, and to separate the saints from the churches. If in this the Brethren were successful, what then would they do?

Send missionaries to the heathen? *Who would SEND?* Men might *go* professedly under an impulse from the Holy Ghost; but there is no church, as at Antioch, to lay hands on them and *send* them. For mark, if this be done by *an assembly of saints*, that assembly then acts as an organized body, and is just a visible church, in no essential thing differing from a particular Congregational or Presbyterian church; and the laying on of hands after fasting and prayer, in no essential differs from ordination and mission, as practiced in sending missionaries to the heathen. So that such acts on the part of an assembly would contravene the theory; thus the theory would be disproved. Acts xiii. 3

But a vital question, as regards missionary work among the nations that sit in darkness, is, "What is the commission given by our ascended Lord to His church on earth?" Commonly, it is regarded as being, "Giving them power to disciple all the nations," and the end aimed at "Unto obedience of faith in all the nations; until every enemy is subdued; and every knee bows to the name of Jesus of those in heaven and in earth, and of those under the earth, and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord;" when at last the shout shall be heard, "the kingdom of this world is become our Lord's, and his Christ's, and he shall reign forever." It was when, less than a hundred years ago, the churches came to realize this their high mission, to set this glorious aim before them, and to seek its accomplishment, that the wondrous missionary era dawned upon the world, which now by its great achievements incites the hope, nerves the arm, Matt. xxvii. 19.  
Rom i. 5.  
Phil. ii. 10, 11.  
Rev. xi. 15.

and stimulates the liberality of the best men and women in every land. To this holy ambition we owe our Bible Societies, our Missionary Societies, our Church Missions, our Schools and educational appliances, and in a word all our christian activity. We aim at winning back the world, both nominally christian and infidel, to God, by proclaiming the gospel of his grace; and we hope to overcome by the word of testimony and the blood of the Lamb. And God has already signally blessed the enterprise. Now every church owns its obligation, and Christians are found working and giving as they are able, towards fulfilling the grand apostolic commission; while from north, south, east and west, the prayer ascends, 'O Lord, how long? Thy kingdom come.'

Now, according to the theory, all this is wrong. Mr. Tractter states it thus: "The service really assigned "to us in God's word is.....The work of warning the "world of approaching judgment, seeking to deliver "souls therefrom by turning them to Christ, and seeking to keep ourselves, and stir up our brethren also "to keep themselves, separate in spirit from the world, "in the steady patient expectation of our Lord's "appearing." Thus the church has only to witness among the nations, not to disciple them; to save the few elect ones and at the same time ensure the condemnation, and increase the guilt of the great mass of gospel hearers, but not to win back the world for God. It is her duty to be zealous with a fiery zeal in destroying the churches while she waits for the Lord to take her home. But there is no hope for the nations.

This is the time not to bless Gentiles, but to gather in the elect, and prepare the earth for judgment. On these principles missions are a grand mistake. The church should not seek to make the world better or happier. She should satisfy herself within narrow limits, and selfishly feed upon the hope, and pray for her heavenly marriage. The sooner she is taken out of the world the better for the Gentiles and the Jews. She is not the salt of the earth, nor a light to lighten the Gentiles. While she remains she only keeps back the day of mercy. Judgments may follow her removal, but the sooner these judgments come the better; for they are mercy in disguise. When the short week of tribulation is over, and not till then, a day of mercy for restored Jew, and living Gentile will dawn. The hope of the world is not the gospel, but wrath followed by a millennial state that needs no gospel, no Holy Ghost, no love; which is to be ushered in by terrors, and fiery judgment. The gospel cannot benefit the world, and hearing it will only increase men's misery. Why then should it be preached at all?

The practice of the Brethren, alas, too closely conforms to this theory. They will not aid other christians in preparing and circulating God's word, though they avail themselves of what the churches have done, and freely spend money on their own polemic literature. They will not co-operate in Bible work, or missionary operations, or assist in any organization of a philanthropic nature. They do not care to see the world improved or the social state of man ameliorated. All reforms in education or measures to improve society are

ignored. The church, the saints, can have no fellowship with men of the world in such mistaken enterprises, for these things do not belong to the heavenlies. Theirs is to sit alone, and pray the Lord to come and take them home ; to labour for the conversion of individuals, and the subversion of the churches, and to hasten the coming wrath upon God's enemies.

We shall go no further in illustrating the dangerous tendencies of the new doctrines which we have felt ourselves called upon to controvert. What we have said will convince any one who is not already blinded by pre-millenarian prejudice, that the *new* views are not harmless notions of good though weak men, but that they are fraught with danger ; and that those who teach them should not be bid good speed, but opposed and corrected. We may be sure that a theory which compels as a logical consequence, those who adopt it, to reject or disbelieve fundamental truths ; which so differs from the doctrine of the whole Church of God for eighteen hundred years as to necessitate a breaking off from it ; which produces uncharitable censoriousness and spiritual pride ; which destroys the peace of families, produces strife among neighbours, and rends the church of God—is a *heresy* in the scripture sense of the word. Let men examine carefully, lest unwittingly they adopt the first principles on which this theory rests, and be on their guard, lest being deceived by the speech and appearance of good men who are themselves deluded, they unconsciously take the first step in departing from the faith once delivered to the saints, and the system of truth which God has given us in his own word. One

false step will necessitate another; and the more thoroughly conscientious, logical and earnest a man is, the greater the danger of his finally adopting the extreme views of Brethrenism; for it is a carefully constructed system of error.

And now, the task we have undertaken is finished; we have done with the controversial discussion of our subject and the unmasking of what we believe to be dangerous error. But we may not forget that the subject of the Lord's coming has a practical aspect, and possesses for each one of us the deepest interest, because fraught with eternal consequences. We need no additions of human fancy, no proclamation of impending earthly judgments to give a sanction of terror to the call of the gospel. It is enough to know "Behold the judge standeth before the door; the night is far spent, the day is at hand; the Lord is at hand; and the end of all things is at hand." Amid the din of this busy sinful world we may, if we hearken, hear the coming foot-fall. The solemn realities of that day should impress us even now, so that we may seek to be prepared for the Lord's appearing and his glory, in that day.

James v. 9.  
Rom. xiii. 12.  
Phil. iv. 5.  
1 Pet. iv. 7.

That day of wrath, that dreadful day  
When heaven and earth shall pass away,  
What power shall be the sinner's stay?  
How shall we meet that dreadful day?  
When, shrivelling like a parched scroll,  
The flaming heavens together roll;  
When louder yet, and yet more dread  
Sounds the high trump that wakes the dead.  
Oh, on that day, that wrathful day  
When man to judgment wakes from clay,

Be THOU the trembling sinner's stay,  
Though heaven and earth shall pass away.

The same Jesus, who once sojourned in Nazareth, died in Jerusalem, shall come again to earth, and every eye shall see him. Not now emptied of his glory, humbled, poor, weak, despised, put to shame, spit upon, crucified; but in his own glory, and his father's glory, and all the holy angels with him. He shall appear in ineffable splendor, clothed with irresistible might, to save his people, and to take vengeance on his enemies.

Each one of us shall see him. The archangel's trump shall peal forth; high heaven shall ring again with the summons, and the grave's deepest caverns shall echo to the call. The dead shall awake and shall come forth to meet the Lord, the Judge. Oh what a meeting! as from catacombs, and caverned mountain sides, from valleys of slaughter and peaceful cemeteries, from depths of ocean, and long desolated wildernesses, earth casts forth her teeming millions; while the sun is darkened, the moon turned into blood, the stars fall from the heavens, and the foundations of the world are overturned amidst the wreck of dissolving nature!

We shall see the Son of God seated on the great white throne. Shall that glorious face appear to our joyous though trembling gaze radiant with holiness, and full of grace? Shall we see the wounds on head and side, in hands and feet, still speaking of love unutterable? Shall we be drawn towards Him with grateful loving confidence, to find shelter beneath the throne, and to lift up our heads with joy because our redemption has come? Oh blessed glorious hope! Or shall that glori-

ous countenance appear to us gloomy with wrath, and dark with holy vengeance? Shall the blaze of brightness, and the severity of justice, and the terror of despised and outraged love, fill us with dismay and forebodings of eternal woe? Shall we seek to flee from the face of him who sits upon the throne? Shall the Lamb slain for us, appear as a ravening lion rising in his fury? Shall the blood which once spoke peace, threaten us with vengeance and wrath to the uttermost? Oh the supreme misery of those who in their anguish shall then call upon the rocks and hills to fall upon them and hide them; alas, in vain!

“Every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.” Alas, for the soldiers who drove home the nails that fixed him on the cross, and who gashed his side with the spear! Alas, for Pilate who gave him up, and the ruffians who wreathed his head with thorns, tore his back with the scourge, and buffeted his blessed cheek! Alas, for the murderers who cried out crucify him, and the mob that yelled forth, His blood be on us and on our children! Alas, for Annas and Caiaphas, who condemned the innocent, and Judas who betrayed his Lord: Alas, alas, for these chief of sinners in that day! But alas too, for those gospel hearers, who crucify him afresh, and put him to an open shame; who tread under foot the law of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing; who spurn his love, make light of his salvation, refuse to own him as Lord, and do despite to the spirit of grace! They too shall wail as they look on him in that day, when long-suffering

forbearance shall be turned to vengeance, and pleading mercy to wrath.

Each one of us shall then "give account of himself to God." Let us not fancy some human assize, with its long painful processes, tedious investigations, conflicting testimonies, imperfect administration and doubtful issues. These pertain not to Christ's judgment seat. Short and swift the trial; full and true the testimony; fair and just the verdict; executed with the perfection of God. Self-accused, self-condemned, speechless, the impenitent sinner will stand; or acknowledged and acquitted by the judge, as justified by grace, each one of us will appear. The ministers of wrath can make no mistake as they read stamped indelibly on each self-condemned countenance, pale with remorse and horror, the sentence of wrath, and separate them for destruction. Nay, the dark abode of endless woe seems preferable to the glare of holiness and blaze of justice. Hell becomes a refuge when it hides from the Judge's frown.

"Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The blessed welcome is spoken, and the righteous go into life eternal. "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." The sentence of doom is uttered, "and these go away into eternal punishment." "He that is unjust let him be unjust still; and he that is righteous let him be righteous still: and he that is holy let him be holy still."

These are the solemn realities with which we have to do. Oh, in view of them how vain this passing world

with its evanescent joys and petty sorrows! How secondary every other question to that of having an interest in Jesus and a place among them that are sanctified! How all important to give earnest heed to the things that have been spoken. Oh let us beware, lest having known the truth, any one should rest short of attaining to eternal life; lest having defended the truth in controversy, we should fail to be sanctified by it, and should be found at Christ's appearing without hope—lost. “ May the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved harmless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

